

THE  
NEGRO FAMILY  
IN CHICAGO

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E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER

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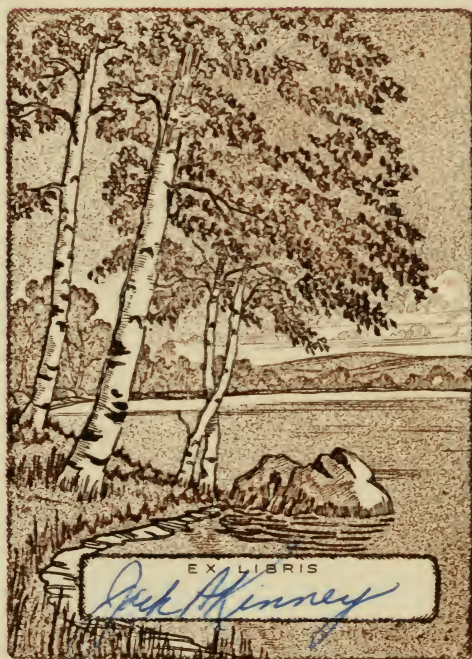
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THE NEGRO FAMILY IN CHICAGO

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# THE NEGRO FAMILY IN CHICAGO

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO BOOKSTORE  
BY  
E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER, Ph.D.  
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CHICAGO - - - ILLINOIS



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See Hist. Bureau

IN MEMORY OF MY MOTHER

MARY CLARK FRAZIER





## EDITOR'S PREFACE

This work on the Negro family is doubly significant. On the one hand, it represents the type of study that needs to be made of the family in its setting under different cultural conditions. On the other hand, it portrays the Negro family in an urban metropolis from a fresh point of view.

It is only perhaps by the comparative study of the family in its cultural backgrounds and in different social situations that the objectivity and perspective necessary for any fundamental description and analysis of the American family will be obtained. For that, if for no other reason, the present opportunity for research in family life among different cultural groups is both inviting and challenging.

First of all, and most imperative, is family research of existing preliterate communities with a social organization and a culture which is threatened by destruction under the impact of contact with Western civilization. Almost all studies until very recently have been of the framework of social organizations and institutions. Recent field studies, however, exemplify and forecast a new approach to the more intimate aspects of family and social life.

In the Orient—in China, India, Japan, and Turkey—the large family system still survives. But this patriarchal household group of father, married sons, their wives and children has begun to disintegrate under the pressure of Western contact. In China, the situation is unusually interesting for research because of the very confusion of the transition period. In sharp contrast and in conflict with each other are the large patriarchal family with absolute parental control over marriage and a youth movement with firm faith

in romantic love and freedom of courtship as the valid basis of marriage.

In Russia the family is being recast in the general process of the reconstruction of all its social institutions. Observers report that in the rural communes the private family as an economic and social unit has already practically disappeared. The most revolutionary experiment in family relations ever undertaken on so extensive a scale is well under way. It offers something like a test situation for the study of the basic problem of the family: How far are its organization and life determined by impulses in human nature or by the conditions of the economic and social environment? This experiment deserves immediate, continuous, and sympathetic study.

Of all situations now available for family research none is perhaps more instructive and interesting than the study of the Negro family in the transition from slavery to freedom, and from the southern plantation to the northern metropolis. This study by Mr. Frazier for the first time in anything like an adequate fashion presents a description and an analysis of the organization of the Negro family in the process of social change.

Nowhere in the history of the world is there so striking an example of the transplanting of a group of people from their native habitat to an alien environment with so complete a loss of their own culture. Under slavery a situation was created where a type of family life emerged with a minimum of cultural definition and an almost entire absence of legal sanction, a type of family organization held together not so much by tradition nor by community control as by the ties of affection, habit, and familial sentiment. Finally, in the last two decades the American Negro, with his simple and

loose familial and social organization, has migrated *en masse* to the city and has been literally hurled into the maelstrom of a modern technological society.

Any understanding of the sexual or family life of the Negro in the city should be seen in this perspective of its historical evolution and its present situation. An outstanding contribution of Mr. Frazier's study is his acute analysis, in this period of general social disorganization, of the rôle of affection, familial sentiments, and traditions in family organization. The distinction which he draws between the well-organized family as typified by the free Negro over against the unorganized Negro family of the plantation provides the frame of reference for an analysis of the elements entering into stable and efficient family organization.

The contribution of this study which will probably receive the greatest attention and have the most practical significance is Mr. Frazier's differentiation of the different Negro zones of settlement in Chicago with their corresponding differences in family organization. He shows quite conclusively that certain behavior popularly attributed to the Negro varies almost, if not quite, as widely within the Negro group as within the white group. The rates of crime, delinquency, illegitimacy, poverty, and vice would seem from this study to be not a matter so much of race as of geography. But these geographical variations in the distance of these different Negro communities from the center of the city are only symbolic of the differences between these areas in familial and social organization. The decreasing rates of the different indexes of social problems from the center to the periphery of the city seem to indicate that their incidence is not a matter of the innate traits of the Negro, but are the direct results of a community situation. The popular im-

pression of the Negro is a group to be characterized by such common attributes as loose family ties, sexual irregularity, excessive crime; what is indicated by this study is no such uniformity, but, instead, variation in these traits area by area, a variability quite as great if not greater than for the white group. In the disorganized downtown communities social problems are concentrated; in the outlying well-organized communities low rates for these problems are found.

Finally, this project suggests the significant rôle of the family in social organization. The chief handicap from which the Negro suffers is perhaps not poverty, nor overcrowding, however serious and challenging these problems may be, but the persistence of an unorganized and disorganized family life. This study not only makes this point clear but it indicates ways in which the Negro family is securing stability and increased efficiency through the development of familial sentiments and traditions and by fostering those objectives which enlist the support of the different members of the family. The study of the Negro in Chicago is being followed by larger study which seeks by obtaining a wider range of data, particularly on the Negro family in the South, to provide an even more comprehensive and systematic statement of the problem.

E. W. BURGESS



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The writer was able to undertake the present study in the fall of 1927 through an appointment as a research assistant in the department of sociology of the University of Chicago and a fellowship grant from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial. After the study had been carried on for nine months, larger support for its prosecution was secured through a joint arrangement between the Chicago Urban League and the Local Community Research Committee of the University of Chicago. This arrangement continued until within three months of the completion of the study when it became a part of a larger project supported by a grant from the Social Science Research Council which permitted the writer to continue his researches in the South. The publication of the Chicago part of the study as a separate monograph has seemed advisable, because it represents an essentially independent study and makes available the results of the testing of a method which has determined largely the procedure of the remainder of the study.

The indebtedness of the writer to his teachers at the University of Chicago will be easily recognized not only by specific references to their works but in the point of view of the entire study. Especial acknowledgment of this indebtedness should be made to Dr. Robert E. Park, whose profound insight into the cultural aspects of the Negro life has been of indispensable aid in the preparation of this volume. During the absence of Dr. Park in the Orient, Dr. Ernest W. Burgess constantly gave the writer the benefit of his criticisms and suggestions. In the theoretical aspects of the

study the teachings of Dr. Ellsworth Faris have influenced the writer throughout the study. To Dr. William F. Ogburn the writer is indebted for his interest in the present study and his desire to see it extended to other sections of the country.

Mr. Monroe N. Work, director of research and records of Tuskegee Institute, and Dr. Charles S. Johnson, director of the social science department of Fisk University, have not only given the writer the benefit of valuable suggestions and advice since the inception of the study but have helped to insure its continuance in the South.

While it is impossible for the writer to acknowledge his indebtedness to the large number of people who have generously furnished histories of their families and other forms of assistance, individual acknowledgment should be made to the following persons: Miss Marion C. Prentiss, for placing at his disposal the records of the social service department of the Cook County Hospital; Mr. Harry Hill, for access to the records of the Juvenile Court; Mr. Clifford R. Shaw, for the use of the materials in the Institute for Juvenile Research; Mr. Joel Hunter and Miss Amelia Sears, for the use of the records of the United Charities; Miss Irene Inderrieden and Mrs. Georgia E. Jones, of the Court of Domestic Relations, for the use of the records and the privilege to interview the clients; Mrs. Mattie Waters, for cooperation in working with her special class of unmarried mothers; Mr. Charles E. Miner, for statistics from the records of the Committee of Fifteen; Mr. Charles Newcomb, of the Local Community Research Laboratory, for valuable suggestions concerning the statistical aspects of the study; and to Miss Gertrude Birkhoff, for assistance with the materials on juvenile delinquency.

Mr. A. L. Foster, executive secretary of the Chicago Urban League, who was originally responsible for the interest of the League in the study, has constantly assisted the writer with the resources of his organization. The writer desires to express his gratitude to Mr. Leonard D. White, executive secretary of the Local Community Research Committee of the University of Chicago, and Mr. Elbridge Bancroft Pierce, chairman of the board of directors of the Chicago Urban League, for making possible the collection of materials which formed the basis of this study. For the shortcomings of the study the writer alone is responsible.

E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER

FISK UNIVERSITY

May 1, 1931





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PART I  
INTRODUCTION





## CHAPTER I

### THE DEMORALIZATION OF THE NEGRO FAMILY

"Without doubt," wrote Du Bois a little over two decades ago, "the point where the Negro American is furthest behind modern civilization is in his sexual mores."<sup>1</sup> He wrote as the representative of the Negro Talented Tenth, whose mission was to lead "the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst."<sup>2</sup> Even the moral status of the mass was conceded by Du Bois to be low; for he estimated that, with one-fourth of their births illegitimate, "at least one-half (of the Negroes) are observing the monogamic sex mores."<sup>3</sup> About the same time Odum, as a young student seeking information on the Negro, accepted the following testimony of a physician as an authentic picture of the home life of the Negro.

In his home life the Negro is filthy, careless and indecent. He is as destitute of morals as any of the lower animals. He does not know even the meaning of work. Three things are wholly unknown to the Negro—virtue, honesty, and truth. We have few exceptions to the above rules. Syphilis and tuberculosis are his worst enemies. To the latter disease he very easily succumbs, due to the close and filthy manner of living. They will pen up four to ten in a small room at night, hence very little oxygen. This is my observation from twenty years of professional work in a section where the population is largely Negroes.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Negro American Family* (Atlanta, 1908), p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, "The Talented Tenth" in *The Negro Problem. A Series of Articles by Representative American Negroes of Today* (New York, 1903), p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Negro American Family*, p. 152.

<sup>4</sup> Howard W. Odum, *Social and Mental Traits of the Negro; Research into the Conditions of the Negro Race in Southern Towns; A Study in Race Traits, Tendencies and Prospects* (New York, 1910), p. 171.

After Odum had peered into the world of the black peasant communities and listened to the lewd songs of loafers about southern towns, he reached conclusions which supported the above estimate of Negro morals.

The indiscriminate mixing in the home; the utter lack of restraint deadens any moral sensibilities that might be present. Nowhere in the home is there restraint; the contact and conduct of its members belong to the lowest classifications. There is little knowledge of the sanctity of home or marital relations; consequently little regard for them. The open cohabitation of the sexes related by no ties of marriage is a very common practice; little is thought of it as it relates to the race; there is apparently no conscience in the matter.<sup>1</sup>

It was during this same period that Pickett, like others who were offering solutions for the "Negro problem," made the following observations on the family life of Negroes.

The census returns exhibit a disheartening condition of family life among negroes. Of course, it is very difficult to obtain accurate statistics upon this subject, but from those presented it is quite apparent that in manner of life, general morality, and observance of the obligations of the marital state, the negro, both North and South, is greatly lacking. Without going into details upon this subject, we may say that the condition of immorality in life presented by this people is one which adds to the difficulty of any adequate solution of the problem.<sup>2</sup>

Before the appearance of these studies, attempts had been made to measure the progress of the Negro since emancipation. Hoffman, in the same book in which he predicted the extinction of the Negro race through the ravages of tuberculosis, concluded that statistics of crime and illegitimacy furnished proof "that neither religion nor education has influenced to an appreciable degree the moral progress of *the*

<sup>1</sup> Odum, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> William P. Pickett, *The Negro Problem. Abraham Lincoln's Solution* (New York, 1909), p. 62.

race.”<sup>1</sup> Worse still, according to this author, religion and education had benefited only a few individuals while “*the race as a whole has gone backwards rather than forwards.*”<sup>2</sup> Hoffman’s study became the basis of other generalizations respecting the sex morals of the Negro. For example, Tillinghast, who undertook a study of the social and economic conditions of the Negro both in Africa and America, was so impressed by the high rate of illegitimacy in cities, and especially the increase in the percentage of illegitimate births in Washington, D.C., from 17.6 in 1879 to 25.5 in 1894, that he concluded, “there can be but a mockery of monogamic family life.”<sup>3</sup>

The statistics on Negro illegitimacy in the District of Columbia have continued to be one of the main sources of judgments on the morality of the Negro. In 1924 Ellwood was of the opinion that Hoffman’s statistics on Negro illegitimacy indicated “the moral condition of the Negro in this regard, and particularly show the demoralization of his family life.”<sup>4</sup> As recently as 1930, Shannon, who has proposed colonization as the only means of saving white America from the moral menace of the Negro, concluded from these statistics that “the family functions very imperfectly, if at all, with a very considerable part of Negro womanhood.”<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the high illegitimate birth-rate “is one

<sup>1</sup> Frederick L. Hoffman, *Race Traits and Tendencies of the American Negro* (New York, 1896), p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Alexander Tillinghast, *The Negro in Africa and America*, “Publications of the American Economic Association” (New York, May, 1902), p. 200.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Ellwood, *Sociology and Modern Social Problems* (New York, 1924), p. 259.

<sup>5</sup> A. H. Shannon, *The Negro in Washington. A Study in Race Amalgamation* (New York, 1930), p. 110.



of the manifest measures of the indifferent success achieved upon the part of the white, during this long contact in mediating the ideals, the morals, of Christianity" to the Negroes.<sup>1</sup>

One of Ellwood's students had reached an even more startling conclusion regarding the family morals of the Negro as the result of a survey in 1904 of the Negroes in Columbia, Missouri. The apparent absence of standards of sex behavior among the impoverished and disorganized migrants in this city as well as the tales of gossip mongers seemed to him to indicate "a perilous approach to that state of promiscuity postulated by a certain school of anthropologists as man's most primitive sex condition."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the opinion of this investigator was scarcely more extreme than that of Thomas, a northern-born mulatto, who had his first experiences with the masses of Negroes in the South during the period of disorganization following the Civil War. In a book which has been read widely since its publication at the beginning of the present century, Thomas set down his observations concerning the morals of the Negro. The following excerpts represent his unqualified conclusions concerning the sex behavior of Negro men and women.

So lacking in moral rectitude are the men of the Negro race that we have known them to take strange women into their homes and cohabit with them with the knowledge, but without protest, from their wives and children. So great is their moral putridity that it is no uncommon thing for their stepfathers to have children by their stepdaughters with the consent of the wife and mother of the girl. Nor do other ties of relationship interpose moral barriers, for fathers and daughters, brothers and sisters, oblivious of decent social restrictions, abandon

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. III.

<sup>2</sup> William Wilson Elwang, *The Negroes of Columbia, Missouri. A Concrete Study of the Race Problem* (Columbia, Missouri, 1904), p. 53.

themselves without attempt at self-restraint to sexual gratification whenever desire and opportunity arises.<sup>1</sup>

Negro women, however, have but dim notions of the nature and obligations of wifehood; for, as we have observed, the leading thoughts which actuate them are to be free from parental control, to secure freedom. Nor is female ante-nuptial knowledge a bar to marriage among Negroes, especially in the alliance of a fair woman to a black man, while illegitimate motherhood is rather a recommendation in the eyes of a prospective husband. Marital immoralities, however, are not confined to the poor, the ignorant, and the degraded among the freed people, but are equally common among those who presume to be educated and refined.<sup>2</sup>

Although there has been a rather general agreement among students and other observers of the morals of the American Negro, the differences in viewpoints underlying these observations must be taken into consideration. The opinions of Thomas, who was a product of New England culture, doubtless reflected his revulsion of feeling toward the disorganized Negroes of the South with whom he was identified by custom and public opinion. It can hardly be denied that the conditions upon which he based his generalizations existed not only at the time when he wrote but have continued to vex those dealing with the Negro. Cases of domestic discord which come daily to the attention of the courts and social agencies give the same picture of family morals among Negroes as that described by Thomas. The following statement by a young Negro woman seeking aid in the Court of Domestic Relations of Chicago in 1929 indicates the extent of the present demoralization of the Negro family among certain sections of the population.

<sup>1</sup> William Hannibal Thomas, *The American Negro. What He Was, What He Is, and What He May Become* (New York, 1901), p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

I am the mother of four children by W—— B——. I met him at the place where I roomed. He liked me and started to going with me and then began "fooling" with me and I told him I was pregnant, and I say, "What are you going to do about it?" He said we will get married but we didn't. That baby was born dead. Then I got that way again but this baby died with the whooping cough. I have been with him six years this March. He taken my kids and go and stay with another woman. I went there last night and she put the burglar chain on and peeped out. I asked her to let me see the kids but she wouldn't let me see my kids. She just closed the door and then opened it again. Then my husband came to the door and run me away. He said, "Get away from here you black son of a b——, I will kill you." So I run down the stairs. . . . We have been having spats but he never did this way before—taking the children. He kept promising me that he was going to marry each time I would get pregnant but he didn't. When I got to the County Hospital to have my babies, I tell lies to save him. . . . This woman is running a disgrace house is why I want to get my children away from there. He told me that he had her and she said that if he would bring the children down there, she would keep him and the children and he didn't have to work unless he wanted to. . . . She was picked up and the law told her not to show up down there no more until the first of January.<sup>1</sup>

The forebodings of Hoffman concerning the moral retrogression of the Negro population found their main support in the increasing illegitimacy rate in the District of Columbia during the last quarter of the past century. Further study of the conditions in the same city, where there has been a steady decline in the illegitimacy rate since 1900, would logically have led to the opposite conclusion. But Shannon, a former prison chaplain having daily contact with the dregs of Negro life, discounts the significance of this decrease, which he thinks "possibly surpasses reasonable expectation," because he assumes that statistics fail to meas-

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.



ure unreported illegitimacy among both married and unmarried Negro women.<sup>1</sup> Tillinghast regarded the demoralization of the Negro in America as a part of the cultural heritage of an alien race with an inferior natural endowment. His assumptions concerning the racial heritage of the Negro were mainly in harmony with anthropological theories current at that time which have since been modified or abandoned as the result of research.

Although Du Bois' characterization of the family life of the Negro was scarcely more favorable than that of other observers, he viewed this condition of the masses as a part of the historical development of the race in America and concluded that

there cannot be in the mind of the patient unprejudiced observer any doubt but that the morals, sexual and other, of the American Negro compare favorably to-day with those of any European peasantry and that a large and growing class is in this respect the equal of the best in the nation.<sup>2</sup>

Du Bois' conclusion was essentially in accord with that of Reuter at the present time who holds that "the homes and home life and the sex standards of the middle and upper class Negroes are essentially the same as those of white Americans of similar economic, educational, and social strata."<sup>3</sup>

Students and observers of Negro life, though approaching the question from different viewpoints, have been in essential agreement concerning the low family morals of the Ne-

<sup>1</sup> Shannon, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *Morals and Manners among Negro Americans*, "Atlanta University Publications," No. 18 (Atlanta, Ga., 1914), p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Byron Reuter, *The American Race Problem. A Study of the Negro* (New York, 1927), p. 221.

gro. This condition has been an outstanding characteristic of Negro life over a long period in spite of the general improvement in educational and economic status since emancipation. Because of the persistence of family disorganization as a major social problem of the Negro, many theories have been offered to explain this situation. These explanations will form the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### THEORIES CONCERNING THE DEMORAL- IZATION OF THE NEGRO FAMILY

Many explanations have been offered to account for the demoralization of the Negro family. These explanations have been advanced, not only by students having a theoretical interest in social life, but also by persons who have dealt with the practical aspects of social adjustment among Negroes. A social worker claimed that it was only after gaining a knowledge of African customs that she was able to understand "the conjugal habits of colored clients."<sup>1</sup> This attempt to explain the family morals of the American Negro by seeking their origin in his African background is typical of a number of theories.

"Blood will tell," seems to some persons an adequate explanation of the irregular sex behavior of the American Negro. It is believed that during the centuries of residence in Africa nature stamped, in the Negro, modes of behavior that enabled him to survive in the struggle against death and disease in the African forests. "Immorality," says Dow, "flourishes among the colored population far more than among the white, not only because of the conditions existing among the negroes during the times of slavery, but also because of their past history in Africa, where the climate tended to the preservation of those with a high birth-rate and thus caused the negro to inherit stronger passions than the white man."<sup>2</sup> Sensuality together with childlike and

<sup>1</sup> Corinne Sherman, "Racial Factors in Desertion," *Family*, III, 224.

<sup>2</sup> Grove Samuel Dow, *Society and Its Problems* (New York, 1922), p. 181.

savage elements in the Negro's nature, Odum thought, "still reflect forcibly the prevalent traits of the Negro in Africa."<sup>1</sup> According to the same author, these racial tendencies and traits have been inherited through many generations; and the strong sex instinct of the Negro only manifests the characteristics of his other animal impulses.<sup>2</sup> Since these racial traits have been "built into the race during long centuries," reasons Weatherford, they "can not be bred out in a few years or even a few decades."<sup>3</sup> It was apparently in Africa that the Negro developed the "sensual concretism" that Elwang thought distinguished him from the Caucasian.

The negroes are still controlled by animal impulses. One of the things which distinguishes them, as a race, from the Caucasians, is their "sensual concretism." Physical stimulation is their chief craving and highest enjoyment. Their inclinations in any direction are seldom checked by reason. In the case of nature's most potent instinct of sex, a scarcely appreciable proportion of the race ever makes any effort whatever to keep it within due metes and bounds.<sup>4</sup>

To Dr. Schuffeldt, an army physician, who suggested transportation to Africa as the only solution of the "Negro problem," the Negro was "a race without morals," that could only "mimic the qualifications of the higher race, just as parrots mimic the human voice."

The higher sentimental qualities of love are totally lacking in true negroes of both sexes in this country today; this fact is easily dis-

<sup>1</sup> Howard Odum, *Social and Mental Traits of the Negro; Research into the Conditions of the Negro Race in Southern Towns; A Study in Race Traits, Tendencies and Prospects* (New York, 1910), p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 259-60.

<sup>3</sup> W. D. Weatherford, *The Negro from Africa to America* (New York, 1924), p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> William Wilson Elwang, *The Negroes of Columbia, Missouri. A Concrete Study of the Race Problem* (Columbia, Mo., 1904), p. 53.



covered by anyone who will take the pains to study their natures with a keen psychological insight. In thousands of instances they undertake to mimic us in this quality as in much else that has for ages pertained to the higher race; as a matter of fact, from first to last, it is the gratification of the sexual appetite that comes up in their minds when typical negroes are brought together, the matter of pure love being constitutionally unknown to them. All this is a question of inheritance with the race in this country. How very, very rare it is that we see two negroes kiss each other, or exhibit any true sentiment in their love-making! The animal instincts arise at once, and the rest of the story is known to us. Many animals below man manifest a far greater amount of real affection in their love-making than do the negroes, and hundreds of cases might be cited even among the various groups of birds.<sup>1</sup>

McCord, who asserted in his study of Negro dependents, defectives, and delinquents, that the "psychical characteristics" of the Negro seemed "to ally him in the expression, at least, with the instinctive and habitual criminal," believed that "a compelling sexual appetite" nullified the desire on the part of a Negro girl to maintain her honor.<sup>2</sup>

While Reuter recognizes the influence of tradition, ignorance, poverty, and isolation in the sex morality of the Negro, he nevertheless believes that the Negro's original nature will assert itself in the end.

The fact is often pointed out that the Negroes are by temperamental endowment extrovert and are possessed of strong native sex appetite. These two facts taken together dispose the Negroes to a degree of sex promiscuity not common to other groups.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> R. W. Schuffeldt, *America's Greatest Problem: The Negro* (Philadelphia, 1915), pp. 46-47.

<sup>2</sup> Charles H. McCord, *The American Negro as a Dependent, Defective, and Delinquent* (Nashville, Tenn., 1914), pp. 42, 106.

<sup>3</sup> Edward B. Reuter, *The American Race Problem. A Study of the Negro* (New York, 1927), p. 220.

These attempts, ranging over a period of thirty years, to account for the Negro's demoralized sex behavior in America by appealing to hypothetical racial traits acquired in Africa, are based largely upon a conception of primitive peoples that once completed the current evolutionary picture of mankind. Dr. Faris has shown how this conception of primitive people fitted into the general hypothetical scheme of human evolution.

The conception of the mind of "primitive man" held by Herbert Spencer had the advantage of aesthetic symmetry and proportion. If animals can be arranged in serried ranks, and if the highest of these is infinitely below the civilized man, there ought surely to be, not only a missing link, but also grades or ranks of men varying in their capacities and possibilities. If this assumption be made, and if the isolated sentences quoted from travelers and residents among savages be duly cited, it is possible to make out a good case, as the classical statement of Spencer shows.<sup>1</sup>

Although the old arguments that once supported this conception have been discredited and even the facts upon which it was based questioned,<sup>2</sup> the belief that the Negro possesses uncontrollable passions and a strong sex impulse, and revels in objects that appeal to his senses, shows the persistent influence of this conception. One authority who has studied the sex behavior of primitive people in relation to their culture is inclined to believe that the sex impulse in the Negro is relatively weak and must be artificially excited. "The notion," writes Crawley,

that the negro race is peculiarly prone to sexual indulgence seems to be due partly to the expansive temperament of the race, and the

<sup>1</sup> Ellsworth Faris, "The Mental Capacity of Savages," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXIII, 603.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 603.



sexual character of many of their festivals—a fact which indicates rather the contrary, and demonstrates the need of artificial excitement.<sup>1</sup>

Crawley's viewpoint receives additional support from biological factors in the problem. It has been pointed out that the reproductive powers of man have increased with civilization because of the effect of a regular food supply and other stimulating factors that make conception in the female "possible almost at any time during the reproductive period."<sup>2</sup>

Associated with the belief in the peculiar strength of the sex impulse in Negroes and other primitive peoples is the idea that their sex behavior is subject only to individual impulses and that social control of the sex impulse is an artificial and ineffectual restraint, without any real sentiment to support it. But the observations of those who have studied these "outbursts" of the sex feelings indicate that the explosion of the sex impulse is part of the general overflow of nervous energy during periods of plenty.<sup>3</sup> The periodic recurrence of these celebrations shows the influence of cultural factors, which make the behavior of the individual subject to the customs of the group.<sup>4</sup> Even among those African peoples who regard pre-marital sex experience with indifference, the restrictions which are imposed after puberty or marriage are supported by powerful taboos and cus-

<sup>1</sup> Ernest Crawley, *Studies of Savages and Sex*, edited by Theodore Besterman (New York, n.d.), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> W. Heape, "The Sexual Season of Mammals and the Relation of the 'Procestium' to Menstruation," *Quarterly Journal of Microscopical Science* (London, 1901), N.S., XLIV, 39. Quoted in Ernest Crawley, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Crawley, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (New York, 1927), pp. 196-97.

toms. These forms of social control, though different from civilized standards, are real, and do not imply organized license or concessions to uncontrollable instincts as some writers claim. Moreover it seems highly probable that the reputed general sexual promiscuity among children is merely a form of mutual masturbation in preparation for marriage. Evidence supporting this view is seen in the fact that "even among the peoples where it is expressly stated that no harm is seen in intercourse between children, the matter becomes serious should the girl become pregnant."<sup>1</sup>

Dowd, who holds that hereditary traits are only partly responsible for the loose morals of Negroes, attempts to show the intimate connection between their so-called sexual incontinence and African culture. He writes:

Under the matrilineal family, which has existed from time immemorial in Africa, sexual incontinence is not attended with the evil consequences that necessarily follow from it among the Caucasian races, the traditions of which are those of the patrilineal family. Consequently there have never developed among the Negro races the ideas of chastity which are so consecrated among the Caucasians. The animistic and polytheistic religion of the African Negroes rather promoted sexual incontinence, and exalts it to a virtue, while the religion of the Caucasian regards sexual incontinence as a cardinal sin.<sup>2</sup>

This simple characterization of the cultural background of the Negro not only fails to take into account the vast variety of cultures found among numerous African peoples but reverses the real situation regarding the method of reckoning descent in Africa. As a matter of fact, in Africa, "the reckoning is so prevailingly patrilineal, that the few cases of matrilineate can scarcely be looked upon as anything but

<sup>1</sup> E. Torday, "The Principles of Bantu Marriage," *Africa*, II, No. 3 (July, 1929), 256.

<sup>2</sup> Jerome Dowd, *The Negro in American Life* (New York, 1926), p. 582.

secondary local modifications."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Dowd's conclusions concerning the chastity and sexual behavior of African Negroes are deductions from his oversimplified description of African culture, and are not based upon the observations of those acquainted with actual conditions. Roscoe, who spent many years in Central Africa, writes concerning the Banyankole:

It is remarkable how careful women are to avoid all connections with men until after marriage. Should any woman commit fornication and have a child before marriage, she is disgraced for life. The clan condemns and disowns her as soon as the fact is known. She is sent away to the sacred lake Karagwe, where she remains until her child is born, after which she may return to her tribe to the man who disgraced her; and should he refuse to take her, she becomes a menial, whom no man will marry except some person who has been disgraced and is unable to obtain a wife, or perhaps some slave may marry her.<sup>2</sup>

Although Westermarck's claim<sup>3</sup> that "numerous African peoples require pre-marital chastity" has been disputed in a more recent examination of the evidence,<sup>4</sup> it appears that the traditional demand for chastity in unmarried women among the aristocratic classes in the more highly organized, warlike, and once powerful, barbaric kingdoms was as emphatic as among Europeans.<sup>5</sup> The social control of sex behavior among African Negroes through customs and tradi-

<sup>1</sup> A. L. Kroeber, *Anthropology* (New York, 1923), p. 234. On the other hand, it seems more probable that the predominance of patrilineal descent in Africa is the result of the development of male domination during the course of social evolution (Robert Briffault, *The Mothers*, I [New York, 1927], 332 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> John Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu* (Cambridge, 1915), p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, I (New York, 1922, 150-57.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Briffault, *The Mothers*, II (New York, 1927), 38 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

tions seems to be as effective as in other parts of the world. Mary Kingsley writes:

For there is, in the Congo Français and the country adjacent to the north of it (Batanga), a regular style of aristocracy which may be summarized firstly thus: All the other tribes look down on the Fans and the Fans look down on all the other tribes. This aristocracy has sub-divisions, the M'pongwe of Gaboon are the upper circle tribe; next come the Benga of Corisco; then the Bapuka; then the Banaka. This system of aristocracy is kept up by the ladies. Thus a M'pongwe lady would not think of marrying into one of the lower tribes, so she is restricted, with many inner restrictions, to her own tribe. A Benga lady would marry a M'pongwe, or a Benga, but not a Banaka, or Bapuka; and so on with the others; but not one of them would marry a Fan. As for the men, well of course they would marry any lady of any tribe, if she had a pretty face, or a good trading connection, if they were allowed to; that's just man's way.<sup>1</sup>

Although it is probably an exaggeration to assume, as did some of the white men who first had contact with African Negroes, that Europeans destroyed native purity and innocence, it is undoubtedly true that European traders and missionaries have destroyed the influence of native customs and traditions. The results of European contacts have been most apparent in the coast towns where prostitution is prevalent and the detribalized native attempts to find a congenial environment for his new ways of living. Mary Kingsley writes:

The Missionary-made man is the curse of the Coast, and you find him in European clothes and without, all the way down from Sierra Leone to Loanda. The pagans despise him, the whites hate him, still he thinks enough of himself to keep him comfortable. His conceit is marvellous, nothing equals it except perhaps that of the individual rife among us which the *Saturday Review* once aptly described as "the suburban agnostic"; and the "missionary man" is very much like the

<sup>1</sup> Mary H. Kingsley, *Travels in West Africa, Congo Français, Corisco and Cameroons* (London, 1897), p. 256.



suburban agnostic in his religious method. After a period of mission-school life he returns to his country-fashion, and deals with the fetish connected with it very much in the same way as the suburban agnostic deals with his religion, i.e., he removes from it all the inconvenient portions. "Shouldn't wonder if there might be something in the idea of the immortality of the soul, and a future Heaven, you know—but as for Hell, my dear sir, that's rank superstition, no one believes in it now, and as for Sabbath-keeping and food restrictions—what utter rubbish for enlightened people!" So the backsliding African deals with his country-fashion ideas: he eliminates from them the idea of immediate retribution, etc., and keeps the polygamy, and the dances, and all the lazy, hazy-minded native ways.<sup>1</sup>

The attitude of the natives, who have not been demoralized by alien influences, toward the behavior of such Negroes in these cities is the same as the attitude of the members of any group that is conscious of a menace to its moral standards. In South Africa, for example, where native males are often employed in occupations generally held by females, "respectable Native parents whose homes are in the country would rather 'see their girls dead than that they should work in town.'"<sup>2</sup>

Tillinghast thought he saw in African customs the characteristic weaknesses of the American Negro family, and specifies the peculiar deficiencies of the African family.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 490.

<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Proceedings of the Fifth General Missionary Conference of South Africa* (Durban, 1922), p. 79. Quoted in *The Native Problem in Africa*, by Raymond Leslie Buell (New York, 1928), p. 52. See also Maurice S. Evans, *Black and White in South East Africa. A Study in Sociology* (New York, 1911): "Fathers and kraal heads absolutely refuse to allow their girls to leave their homes to come and live in town, and incur all the temptations incident to town life of a native girl. Occasionally they may be allowed to visit their male relations at work in town, but always accompanied by a male relative. The guardians of the girls feel that, away from parental control and the discipline of home life, open to the attentions of all the wastrels who gravitate into towns, the risks are far too great" (p. 167).

The West African father felt little concern in his children; the mother, while showing impulsive affection for them at times, had no idea whatever of systematically correcting and training them. Thus, at the time the negroes came to this country there had not been developed in the race strong and enduring parental affections nor more than a very slight sense of responsibility for careful bringing up of children.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever the source of this description of the African family, it reveals the characteristic tendency toward unwarranted generalizations concerning the behavior of primitive peoples.<sup>2</sup> The experience of those who have lived among Negroes has not confirmed this hypothetical childlike impulsiveness of Negroes. For example, Dr. Faris writes, "we were able, on the Congo, to write contracts for a year at a time and keep large numbers of servants and workmen constantly employed with as little trouble among the laborers as we would expect to encounter here at home."<sup>3</sup> Mungo Park, who penetrated the West Coast during the last years of the eighteenth century, tells the following incident concerning the family relations of Negroes.

In the course of the day, several women, hearing that I was going to Sego, came and begged me to inquire of Mansong, the King, what was become of their children. One woman in particular, told me that her son's name was Mamadee; that he was no heathen, but prayed to God morning and evening, and had been taken from her about three years ago, by Mansong's army; since which she had never heard of him. She said she often dreamed about him; and begged me, if I should see him, either in Bambarra, or in my own country, to tell him that his mother and sister were still alive.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Alexander Tillinghast, *The Negro in Africa and America*, "Publications of the American Economic Association" (New York, May, 1902), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Faris, *op. cit.*, p. 605.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 613.

<sup>4</sup> Mungo Park, *The Travels of Mungo Park* (New York, n.d.), pp. 142-43.

Weatherford, who thinks that slavery only partially succeeded in removing the burden of African immorality, echoes popular ideas concerning African family life.

The early slaves, therefore, did not bring with them to America a very exalted idea of morals or of family life. There was no real home life, and the bond between husband and wife was very loose. Slavery did comparatively little to change this condition, though it did give a bit more privacy, and the relation of husband and wife, while still loose, had at least the example of the white people to strengthen it, and was not very frequently broken up.<sup>1</sup>

Although one might surmise that the African home did not provide the privacy of American slave huts, Mary Kingsley found that among the Bubis, with their high moral standards and extremely rare offenses, even the little children had each a separate sleeping hut.<sup>2</sup>

The so-called defects of the African family, which were supposedly remedied to some extent under American slavery, can only be regarded as defects when the behavior of African Negroes is abstracted from its true cultural context. The sexual behavior of African Negroes is bound by moral regulations which derive their value from their efficiency as safeguards for marriage and the family. In the study of an alien culture "there is no greater source of error in sociology," Malinowski has shown in his comprehensive and intimate study of the sexual life of a primitive group, "than a false perspective in sexual morality."<sup>3</sup>

In those instances in which authors have sought in African sex mores the source of the low morals of the American Negro, it has been assumed more or less explicitly that

<sup>1</sup> W. D. Weatherford, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Mary H. Kingsley, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> B. Malinowski, *The Sexual Life of Savages*, II (New York, 1930), 440.



African customs were not only transmitted by slaves to America but took root on an alien soil. However, no attempt has been made to connect definitely any specific form of sex behavior in America with any of the diverse peoples represented in the slaves brought to America. This diversity of tribal elements included the strong, haughty, ferocious Fantis from the Sudan, who often committed suicide or killed their masters rather than submit to slavery, as well as the sickly peoples from the Gaboon.

Of another sort were the Mandingoes, Foulahs and other stocks from the Senegambian region of the northwest, who doubtless owed to an Arabic infusion the talents which made some of them esteemed for responsible functions; but many of these had a delicate physique which unfitted them for heavy labor. From another extreme, the far south, came Congoes and Angolas, slender and slightly, mild and honest, but as a rule notoriously stupid. But from the middle zone, the Slave Coast, where the Niger threads its delta to the sea, where in the fetid ports of Bonny and Benin, Lagos and Calabar a stream of slaving ships met converging streams of slave coffles and bartered their fire-arms and fire water, goods and gewgaws, there came the main supply of living "ebony." Hence were brought Eboes of jaundice tinge in eyes and skin, with prognathous faces and mournful natures inclining them in duress to seek death by their special device of "swallowing their tongues." Hence also the Whydahs, Nagoes and Pawpaws, whose disposition to take floggings "as the chastisement of legal authority to which it is their duty to submit" made them ideal slaves for the generality of masters.<sup>1</sup>

Reports of the survival of African traditions and customs in America have not been lacking. For example, it was reported that at a Negro wedding in Alabama in 1892 the bride was chased "after the ceremony in a manner very similar to the Zulu ceremony."<sup>2</sup> A former slave claimed that

<sup>1</sup> Ulrich B. Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Boston, 1929), p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Negro American Family* (Atlanta, 1908), p. 21.

among his fellow slaves there were several, "who must have been, from what I have since learned, Mahomedans; though at that time, I had never heard of the religion of Mahomed. There was one man on this plantation, who prayed five times every day, always turning his face to the east, when in the performance of his devotions."<sup>1</sup> It is possible that in a few sporadic instances small groups of slaves with a common cultural background might have attempted to perpetuate their customary practices in the New World; but this was unlikely on any large scale because of the conditions under which slavery was introduced into America. In fact, the process of disorganization of tribal life began in the great slave markets on the West Coast, from which old slave trails penetrated into the interior of Africa. Coming from all parts of Africa, the slaves, without common traditions or even a means of communication,<sup>2</sup> soon lost the memories of their homeland. Dr. Park writes:

There was less opportunity in the United States than in the West Indies for a slave to meet one of his own people, because the plantations were considerably smaller, more widely scattered, and especially, because as soon as they were landed in this country, slaves were immediately divided and shipped in small numbers, frequently no more

<sup>1</sup> Charles Ball, *Slavery in the United States. A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, a Black Man* (Lewistown, Pa., 1836), p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> A Negro slave who was brought to Virginia about 1755 and was shortly afterward taken to England wrote as follows concerning his isolation: "We were landed up a river a good way from the sea, about Virginia county, where we saw a few or none of our native Africans, and not one soul who could talk to me. I was a few weeks weeding grass, and gathering stones in a plantation; and at last all my companions were distributed different ways, and only myself was left. I was now exceedingly miserable, and thought myself worse off than any of the rest of my companions; for they could talk to each other, but I had no person to speak to that I could understand" (*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself* [London, 1789], I, 90-91).

than one or two at a time, to different plantations. This was the procedure with the very first Negroes brought to this country. It was found easier to deal with the slaves, if they were separated from their kinsmen. On the plantation they were thrown together with slaves who had already forgotten or only dimly remembered their life in Africa.<sup>1</sup>

The following newspaper account of the reception of four native Africans on a Georgia plantation, except for the inferred detail concerning the delight of the newcomers, is probably indicative of the general attitude of the slaves toward their African background.

Our common darkies treat them with sovereign contempt walking around them with a decided aristocratic air. But the Africans are docile and very industrious and are represented as being perfectly delighted with their new homes and improved conditions. The stories that they are brutes and savages is all stuff and nonsense. It was put in the papers by men who do not know what they are talking about. As to their corrupting our common negroes, we venture the assertion would come nearer the truth if stated the other way.<sup>2</sup>

It appears, in the absence of any reliable evidence to the contrary, that all that remains today of the Negro's African background is a tradition in a family here and there of an ancestor, quite often an African prince,<sup>3</sup> having been a na-

<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Park, "The Conflict and Fusion of Cultures," *Journal of Negro History*, IV, 117.

<sup>2</sup> *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, "Plantation and Frontier," II, 54-55.

<sup>3</sup> E.g., Robert Moton relates the following concerning the origin of his family in America: "About the year of 1735, a fierce battle was waged between two strong tribes on the west coast of Africa. The chief of one of these tribes was counted among the most powerful of his time. This chief overpowered his rival and slaughtered and captured a great number of his band. Some of the captives escaped, others died, others still committed suicide, till but few were left. The victorious chief delivered to his son about a dozen of this forlorn remnant, and he, with an escort, took them away to be sold into slavery. The young African pushed his way through the jungle with

tive African; and a few names such as Quash, Cuffee, and Cudjoe.<sup>1</sup> The superstitious beliefs and practices that are found among southern Negroes developed on the isolated slave plantations. Likewise it was on the plantation that some form of family life developed.

Concerning the type of family that developed under slavery, opinion has been divided. Weatherford, as we have seen, thought slavery tended to elevate the family morals of the Negro. But the opposite viewpoint expressed by Du Bois, who says that "the great body of field hands were raped of their own sex customs and provided with no binding new ones,"<sup>2</sup> represents a more general opinion, namely, that the present demoralization of the Negro family is due to the influence of slavery. Writing concerning the post-bellum plantation Negro whom he regards as much a child of nature with unbridled instincts as he was in Africa, one author says:

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his bodyguard until he reached the coast. Arrived there, he sold his captives to the captain of an American slave ship and received his pay in trinkets of various kinds, common to the custom of the trade. Then he was asked to row out in a boat and inspect the wonderful ship. He went, and with the captain and the crew saw every part of the vessel. When it was all over they offered him food and he ate it heartily. After that he remembered no more till he woke to find himself in the hold of the ship chained to one of the miserable creatures whom he himself had so recently sold as a slave, and the vessel itself was far beyond the sight of land. After many days the ship arrived at the shores of America; the human cargo was brought to Richmond and this African slave merchant was sold along with his captives at public auction in the slave markets of the city. He was bought by a tobacco planter and carried to Amelia County, Virginia, where he lived to be a very old man. This man was my grandmother's great grandfather" (Robert Russa Moton, *Finding a Way Out* [New York, 1920], pp. 3-4).

<sup>1</sup> Ulrich B. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *op. cit.*, p. 21.



Slavery certainly transmitted no influence to the present day that is calculated to moderate this instinct. That system debased both man and woman by making true marriage impossible, and in doing this it tempted both sexes to revert to the natural relations of mere temporary impulse and convenience. Continence and chastity could not well be fostered and encouraged under it, as it was opposed, in its first principles, to wholesome sentiment in the family, and even to the existence of home itself, which is the only fortification against promiscuous intercourse. However faithfully both members of the couple might observe the marital obligations, their union could amount only to a passing arrangement as long as their owner had the power to sell either at any moment that his interests moved him to do so. The possibility of such rupture, followed by a final separation, was enough in itself to weaken, or at least to embitter, the relation, however firmly cemented apparently by affection and the birth of children. Marriage under the old régime was very like unlawful cohabitation under the new, only that the master, by the power he had, compelled the nominal husband and wife to live together permanently.<sup>1</sup>

The above description of the slave family indicates what the logical consequences of the institution of slavery would have been if the implications of the legal code governing slavery had alone determined the behavior of master and slave. But slavery in many parts of the South constituted a moral order in which the lives of master and slave were intertwined; and the actual social relations between master and slave and the slaves themselves cannot be inferred either from legal definitions of status or from the romantic tradition in which ante-bellum life in the South has been enshrined.<sup>2</sup> "All in all, the slave régime was a curious blend of force and concession, of arbitrary disposal by the master

<sup>1</sup> Phillip A. Bruce, *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman* (New York, 1889), pp. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Pendleton Gaines, *The Southern Plantation* (New York, 1925), chap. vii.

and self-direction by the slave, of tyranny and benevolence, of antipathy and affection."<sup>1</sup>

Under such diverse circumstances as these, the slave family reflected the accommodations of the personal inclinations and interests of the slave to the slave régime. There were enough actual cases to support the stereotyped descriptions of slave families being torn asunder that abounded in abolitionist literature. There was also concubinage, the extent of which is shown by statistics on the mulatto population. To the slave trader and the capitalist the slave might be a utility without a personality involving familial and other social relations. On the frontier of the advancing slave power, beyond the reach of a humanizing public opinion, the slave was subject to the arbitrary power of crude adventurers.<sup>2</sup> But, on the other hand, the daughter of a slave born in Maryland in 1819 writes concerning the situation in which her mother was born:

Among Miss Sallie's slaves were great grandmothers, grandmothers, mothers, children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, for she seldom sold any of her people. Her women were taught and required to be as chaste as were her nieces. All received great care, and much attention from Miss Sallie personally, requiring them to sleep in the great house until their marriage. . . .<sup>3</sup>

It was a rare thing, indeed, for slave girls to reach majority before being married or becoming mothers. Be it said to the credit of Sarah O. Hilleary that she taught those girls the value of a good name, and personally watched over them so carefully that it was known far and near. She allowed them to be married in her dining-room instead of in the cabin, and with ceremony. She always had to see and pass upon the

<sup>1</sup> Ulrich B. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, II, 181, in *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, II, 45.

<sup>3</sup> Nellie Arnold Plummer, *Out of the Depths or The Triumph of the Cross* (Hyattsville, Md., 1927), p. 19.

man who was to marry one of her maids. She did all she could to impress them with the importance of being clean, honest, truthful, industrious, and religious.<sup>1</sup>

While the above picture of family relations represents the more favorable conditions of house servants under slavery, it indicates to what extent control and stability were developed and maintained in some slave families. However, it is probable that planters who were indifferent to the morals of slaves were found as frequently as the one who instructed his overseer: "Marriages shall be performed in every instance of a nuptial contract, and the parties settled off to themselves without encumbering other houses to give discontent. No slave shall be allowed to cohabit with two or more wives or husbands at the same time; doing so shall subject them to a strict trial and severe punishment."<sup>2</sup>

The slave family was on the whole monogamous, and its moral character reflected the surrounding socializing influences. "Parents love their children," states a report from South Carolina, "and in most cases the children obey their parents. The duties of husband and wife are faithfully performed. I have heard of few instances of want of chastity amongst them, and but one case, in several years, has occurred of an unmarried woman having a child, on a plantation comprising, perhaps, 10 or 15 such."<sup>3</sup> These observations indicate to some extent the moralization of life among those slaves who had developed some appreciation of social and moral distinctions, and the more ambitious and energetic

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Ulrich B. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

<sup>3</sup> Charleston, S.C., *Proceedings of the Meeting, May 13-15, 1845*, "On the Religious Instruction of the Negroes, Together with the Report of the Committee, and the Address to the Public," p. 38.



ic town slaves, many of whom were skilled artisans, hiring their own time and competing with free labor. But the family life of this class could not avert the changing fortunes of masters and the steady undercurrent of powerful economic forces that tore asunder the strongest family ties. As an accommodation to the slave régime, the slave family served as an instrument of social control and represented a reconciliation of the interests and wishes of master and slave. We shall now proceed to consider how the Negro family has fared since the Civil War, when the social system, of which the slave family was a part, was dissolved.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE NEGRO FAMILY SINCE EMANCIPATION

"One day in 1865," writes a Negro bishop who was once a slave, "I was plowing with a mare called 'Old Jane,' and I looked and saw the 'Yankees.' I had heard before of their coming. I took out Old Jane and went to the house about three o'clock in the afternoon. I was asked why I had come home at that hour. I told them 'I was afraid the Yankees would steal my horse so I brought her home,' but that was not the cause at all. Freedom had come, and I came to meet it."<sup>1</sup> If, at first, the accustomed spirit of subordination broke through the resolution of this fifteen-year-old boy to realize his new status, his conception of his rights as a free man emboldened him to leave four weeks later, when the overseer under the influence of liquor whipped the former slaves. "That night," the bishop continues, "I took all my belongings, put them in a pocket handkerchief and went to freedom. Thus ended slavery for me."<sup>2</sup>

The behavior of this slave boy is characteristic of the manner in which the great body of slaves first realized their new status. "After the coming of freedom," wrote Booker Washington, "there were two points upon which practically all the people on our place were agreed, and I find that this was generally true throughout the South: that they must change their names, and that they must leave the plantation for at least a few days or weeks in order that they might

<sup>1</sup> William H. Heard, *From Slavery to Bishopric* (Philadelphia, 1924), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

really feel sure that they were free.”<sup>1</sup> Thus to move about without the restrictions which had characterized slavery became for the freedmen the most immediate test of their freedom. And in their attempt to lose their old identity and become new persons, they naïvely changed their names.<sup>2</sup>

Movement on the part of the slaves was also due in many cases to a desire to find their relatives and mates who had been sold away. Often when they succeeded in locating their former mates, the latter had married as in the case of the father of a former slave who recalls: “My ma heard that my father was in Greensboro. I walked with ma might nigh to death to git there. We met somebody who knowed my father, and we found him. Ma wouldn’t go back to him. The woman he had, she taken me on with her.”<sup>3</sup>

The advance of the northern armies disrupted the plantation system and set adrift hordes of ignorant and idle slaves. Many fugitives swarmed into the Union Army camps, where their numbers created problems of disease and poverty as well as problems of discipline. Some wandered about without any destination while others were attracted to the towns and cities.<sup>4</sup> Some indication of the social disorganization that resulted is found in the following account of an eye witness at Port Royal, South Carolina.

The hardships they underwent to march with the army are fearful, and the children often gave out and were left by their mothers ex-

<sup>1</sup> Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (New York, 1902), p. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Some former slaves have said that changing one’s family name depended in some cases upon whether the former master, whose name was often taken, was kind or otherwise.

<sup>3</sup> *Autobiography of an Ex-slave* (manuscript).

<sup>4</sup> Carter G. Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migrations* (Washington, D.C., 1918), pp. 101-7. “It was said that in 1864, 30,000 to 40,000 Negroes had come from the plantations to the District of Columbia” (p. 105).

hausted and dying by the roadside and in the fields. Some even put their children to death, they were such a drag upon them, till our soldiers, becoming furious at their barbarous cruelty, hung two women on the spot. In contrast to such selfishness, she told us of one woman who had twelve small children—she carried one and her husband another and for fear she should lose the others she tied them all together by the hands and brought them all off safely, a march of hundreds of miles. The men have all been put to work in the quartermaster's department or have gone into the army, and the families are being distributed where they can find places for them.<sup>1</sup>

The general mobility of the Negro population was a result of the breaking up of the traditional social organization in the South. When the Negro was liberated from the customary and traditional forms of control, individual impulses were released.<sup>2</sup> Theft and licentiousness, by which his behavior at this time is characterized, were the natural consequences of this crisis in the South.<sup>3</sup> One observer has described the behavior of a Negro woman as follows:

Mammy Maria, who had left two husbands in Mississippi, came out in the new country as "Miss Dabney," and attracted, as she informed her "white children," as much admiration as any of the young girls, and had offers of marriage too. But she meant to enjoy her liberty, she said, and should not think of marrying any of them.<sup>4</sup>

Even in those cases where the family discipline had been well established, the lack of authority on the part of the

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Pearson, *War Letters from Port Royal, Written at the Time of the Civil War* (Boston, 1906), pp. 293-94.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Park describes the effects of mobility as follows: "The effect of mobility and migration is to secularize relations which were formerly sacred. One may describe the process, in its dual aspect, perhaps, as the secularization of society and the individuation of the person" ("Human Migration and the Marginal Man," in *Personality and the Social Group*, edited by Ernest W. Burgess [Chicago, 1929], p. 71).

<sup>3</sup> Carter G. Woodson, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Smedes, *A Southern Planter* (Baltimore, 1887), p. 179.



master to enforce obedience to the husband's or the parents' will meant the breakdown of family life.<sup>1</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that the Negro family, which was at best an accommodation to the slave order, went to pieces in the general break-up of the plantation system.

It was only slowly that the Negro was reintegrated into the new social order. The process of stabilization was easier with those families that had acquired some degree of organization under slavery. There were Negroes, too, who, after their experience with freedom as the wards of northern troops, preferred to return to their former masters.<sup>2</sup>

The change from slavery to freedom involved a rearrangement of the physical organization of the plantation that had been adapted to gang labor under the direction of an overseer. But after emancipation the desire for self-direction made the presence of a "supertender," as he was called by the former slaves, irksome. Slave row was often broken up and the houses were scattered so that each family could carry on an independent existence.<sup>3</sup>

A Negro minister in the history of his family tells how his grandfather had refrained from joining the general movement of slaves and had remained on the plantation until he was able to set up for himself. It is significant that, during slavery, this family had maintained its integrity and the head of the family had occupied a position of trust and authority on the plantation. In 1864, "they began life anew

<sup>1</sup> Phillip A. Bruce, *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman* (New York, 1889), p. 4. A former slave tells how his mother took the children and went to live in Nashville in defiance of his father's decision to remain on his former master's place (manuscript document).

<sup>2</sup> Carter G. Woodson, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> David C. Barrow, "A Georgia Plantation," *Scribner's Monthly*, XXI (April, 1881), 831.

on a farm of forty-eight acres, upon which they had made an initial payment to their former master."<sup>1</sup> The process of stabilization of the slave family under the new order is illustrated in the case of another slave who had built a home for his family in 1841 on a plantation in Maryland. After ten years with his family, his wife and children were sold, but family consciousness was strong enough to maintain family ties for ten years through correspondence and periodic visits. In 1861 his family was restored to him, and the family continued its existence in the old homestead until 1870. His daughter writes that in that year

father had finished building our four-room log house, and we moved from that happy place on Calvert's land, where sister, Miranda, had returned, and where the church was started, about two or three hundred feet westward toward the B. & O. R. R., into a happier place—Our Own Home! And by March 17, 1872, every dollar that had been borrowed had been returned.<sup>2</sup>

The Negro family did not always begin its career on the modified plantation under as favorable circumstances as the cases just considered. Without a family tradition the bonds of sympathy between members of the same household and the natural affection between parents and offspring tended to hold the family group together. "It was commonly thought," wrote one who had experience with the Negro during the transition from slavery to freedom, "that the negroes, when freed, would care very little for their children, and would let them die for want of attention, but experience has proved this surmise unfounded. On the contrary I suppose they take as good care of them, as do the same class

<sup>1</sup> Miles Mark Fisher, *The Master's Slave—Elijah John Fisher* (Philadelphia, 1922), pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> Nellie Arnold Plummer, *op. cit.*, p. 106.



of people anywhere.”<sup>1</sup> At the same time there was a community of interests among the recently emancipated slaves that tended to integrate the Negro family into the life of the Negro community, which centered about the church and the school. The Negro church, which was the only form of group life that gave expression to the slaves’ hopes and conceptions of the world, survived the crisis of emancipation and continued to exercise social control. Those among the former slaves and the free Negroes who had acquired some education and appreciation of standards of conduct became the leaders and attempted to enforce rules of behavior. A Negro minister who participated in the efforts of the Negroes after emancipation to build up and maintain standards of behavior writes:

The close of the war found many living together without being married. My mother became a self-constituted missionary to such, and so soon as our minister came, mother began gathering up all who were irregular in their connubial relations, and arranging with the minister for quiet weddings. The license did not cost much and contracting parties, even to this day, very seldom give the minister much. It was pathetic to see old people who had lived for years as man and wife; who had children and grandchildren, going to have the marriage ceremony performed. So long as the neglect was from no fault of theirs, it made no difference to man; and a just God did not hold them morally responsible. But now, according to my mother’s theory, it was a case of: “arise and shine for thy light has come.” Then again, there was father Jones, who, even in the presence of death, would not spare those who through carelessness and indifference refused to have the sacred and divine rite of marriage performed.<sup>2</sup>

The rôle of this family, which happened to be of free origin, among the newly emancipated slaves gives some indica-

<sup>1</sup> David C. Barrow, *op. cit.*, p. 835.

<sup>2</sup> Levi J. Coppin, *Unwritten History, an Autobiography*, by L. J. Coppin (Philadelphia, 1919), pp. 125-26.

tion of the influence of this class in the social development of the Negro. The free Negroes have usually been represented as a despised class of degraded paupers who were a burden and a menace to the white communities in which they were found.<sup>1</sup> But the actual economic and social status of the free Negro presented vivid contrasts, which Phillips has described as follows:

Ranging as they did in complexion from a tinged white to full black, in costume from Parisian finery to many-colored patches, in culture from serene refinement to sloven superstitious uncouthness, these people showed a diverse reflection of the patterns presented by the other groups in the community. Originating nothing, they complied in all things that they might live as a third element in a system planned for two.<sup>2</sup>

A class of free Negroes had existed in America from the time they were first introduced into the Virginia colony in 1619. As early as 1651 there is record of one Anthony Johnson, who was probably among the indentured servants enumerated in 1624, having assigned to him in fee simple a land patent to two hundred and fifty acres of land.<sup>3</sup> The increase in the free Negro population came from five sources: children born of free colored persons; mulatto children born of free colored mothers; mulatto children born of white servants or free women; children of free Negro and Indian parentage; and manumitted slaves.<sup>4</sup> Although it is not known what proportion of the nearly half million free Negroes in 1860 came from each of these sources, the accessions to the free Negro class through union of free white women

<sup>1</sup> H. B. Schoolcraft, *By a Southern Lady. Letters on the Condition of the African Race in the United States* (Philadelphia, 1852).

<sup>2</sup> Ulrich B. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

<sup>3</sup> John H. Russell, *The Free Negro in Virginia* (Baltimore, 1913), p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

and Negro men, and free colored women and white men, were kept at a minimum by the drastic laws against such relations. Russell says concerning the free mulattoes of Virginia:

The free mulatto class, which numbered 23,500 by 1860, was of course the result of illegal relations of white persons with negroes; but, excepting those born of mulatto parents, most persons of the free class were not born of free negro or free white mothers, but of slave mothers, and were set free because of their kinship to their master and owner.<sup>1</sup>

The process by which the free Negro population was increased accounts largely for the predominance of the mulatto element in this class. Snyder, in showing how the sex relations existing between masters and slaves were responsible for the free class in Mississippi, cites the fact that, "of the 773 free persons of color in Mississippi in the year 1860, 601 were of mixed blood, and only 172 were black."<sup>2</sup> In 1850 mulattoes formed about 37 per cent of the free Negro population, while only 8 per cent of the slaves were so classified.<sup>3</sup>

The free Negroes lived chiefly in cities.<sup>4</sup> In Virginia, in

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Charles S. Snyder, "The Free Negro in Mississippi before the Civil War," *American Historical Review*, XXXII (July, 1927), 787.

<sup>3</sup> "At the censuses of 1850 and 1860 the terms 'black' and 'mulatto' appear not to have been defined. In 1850 enumerators were instructed simply in enumerating colored persons to write 'B' or 'M' in the space on the schedule, to indicate black or mulatto, leaving the space blank in the case of whites" (*Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1815*, p. 207; see Edward Byron Reuter, *The Mulatto in the United States* [Boston, 1918], p. 116).

<sup>4</sup> The free Negroes were distributed in seven characteristic areas: the tide-water region of Virginia and Maryland; the piedmont region of North Carolina and Virginia; the seaboard cities of Charleston, S.C.; Mobile, Ala.; and

1860, between a fourth and a third of them were to be found in the towns and cities.<sup>1</sup> A similar situation was found in Maryland.<sup>2</sup> In 1830, of the 16,710 free Negroes in the state of Louisiana, 11,906 lived in New Orleans.<sup>3</sup> More than a third of the free Negro population of Pennsylvania was in

TABLE I  
NUMBER OF FREE COLORED PERSONS; NUMBER ATTENDING  
SCHOOL; AND NUMBER ILLITERATE IN SELECTED  
COUNTIES IN 1850

City	Free Colored Total	Free Colored in School for Whole County	Adult Free Colored Illiterate
Louisville, Ky.....	1,538	141	567
Baltimore, Md.*.....	25,442	1,453	9,318
Washington, D.C.†.....	8,158	420	2,674
Richmond, Va.....	2,369	0	1,594
Petersburg, Va.....	2,616	0	1,155
Charleston, S.C.*.....	3,441	68	45
Savannah, Ga.....	686	0	185
Mobile, Ala.....	715	53	12
New Orleans, La.....	9,905	1,008	2,279

\* City and county are coterminous.

† For the city of Washington only.

Philadelphia in 1860.<sup>4</sup> It was in the urban environment that the free Negroes had an opportunity to enter a variety of

New Orleans; the northern cities including Boston, New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington; Hammond County, Indiana; and Wilberforce, Ohio; isolated communities of Negroes mixed with Indians; and finally the Seminoles of Florida (from lecture notes on "The Negro in America," by Dr. Park).

<sup>1</sup> John H. Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey R. Brackett, *The Negro in Maryland* (Baltimore, 1889), p. 265.

<sup>3</sup> Carter G. Woodson, *Free Negro Heads of Families in the United States in 1830* (Washington, D.C., 1925), Introduction, p. xxi.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Raymond Turner, *The Negro in Pennsylvania* (Washington, D.C., 1911), p. 253.



occupations and acquire some degree of independence.<sup>1</sup> A significant development in the economic life of the Philadelphia Negro prior to the Civil War was the guild of the caterers which grew up about 1840 and continued until about 1870. It was through them that the Negro was able to overcome the disastrous competition of foreign labor and find a field where the more energetic among them could achieve economic independence.<sup>2</sup> There were listed for 1860 among the taxpayers in Charleston 371 free persons of color, including thirteen Indians, who were paying taxes on real estate valued at about a million dollars and 389 slaves.<sup>3</sup> In Baltimore and Charleston the competition of the free Negroes was formidable enough to call forth protests.<sup>4</sup>

In cities like Charleston and New Orleans the free Negro population which was chiefly mulatto had a foundation of culture that went back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. In Charleston, South Carolina, as early as 1790

<sup>1</sup> A study of the Negro population in Philadelphia in 1847 showed the occupations of 3,358 Negro males to be as follows: mechanics, 286; laborers, 1,581; seafaring men, 240; coachmen, carters, etc., 276; shop keepers and traders, 166; waiters, cooks, etc., 557; hairdressers, 156; various, 96. There were also among the men musicians, preachers, physicians, and school teachers. Although the majority of the 4,249 Negro women were classed as washerwomen and domestic servants, 486 were needlewomen and 213 were in trades. The lowest class of colored people who were out of employment found ragging and boning a means of livelihood (*A Statistical Inquiry into the Conditions of the People of Colour, of the City and District of Philadelphia* [Philadelphia, 1849], pp. 17-18).

<sup>2</sup> W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* (Philadelphia, 1899), pp. 32-39.

<sup>3</sup> *List of the Tax Payers of the City of Charleston for 1860*, pp. 315-34.

<sup>4</sup> *Documentary History of American Industrial Society*, "Plantation and Frontier," II, 108. See also Charles H. Wesley, *Negro Labor in the United States: 1850-1925. A Study in American Economic History* (New York, 1927), pp. 37-38.

the Brown Fellowship Society became the center of the cultural aspirations of the free Negroes.<sup>1</sup> In New Orleans the free mulattoes constituted a distinct caste with special privileges. A contemporary account of the class says:

By 1830, some of these gens de couleur had arrived at such a degree of wealth as to own cotton and sugar plantations with numerous slaves. They educated their children, as they had been educated, in France. Those who chose to remain there, attained, many of them, distinction in scientific and literary circles. In New Orleans they became musicians, merchants, and money and real estate brokers. The humbler classes were mechanics; they monopolized the trade of shoemakers, a trade for which, even to this day, they have special vocation; they were barbers, tailors, carpenters, upholsterers. They were notable successful hunters and supplied the city with game. As tailors, they were almost exclusively patronized by the élite, so much so that the Legoasters', the Dumas', the Clovis', the Lacroix', acquired individually fortunes of several hundred thousands of dollars. This class was most respectable; they generally married women of their own status, and led lives quiet, dignified and worthy, in homes of ease and comfort. A few who had reached a competency sufficient for it, attempted to settle in France, where there was no prejudice against their origin; but in more than one case the experiment was not satisfactory, and they returned to their former homes in Louisiana. . . .

It is true, they possessed many of the civil and legal rights enjoyed by the whites, as to the protection of person and property; but they were disqualified from political rights and social equality. But . . . it is always to be remembered that in their contact with white men, they did not assume that creeping posture of debasement—nor did the whites expect it—which has more or less been forced upon them in fiction. In fact, their handsome good-natured faces seem almost incapable of despair. It is true the whites were superior to them, but they, in their turn, were superior, and infinitely superior, to the blacks, and had as much objection to associating with the blacks on terms of equality as any white men could have to association with them. At the Orleans theatre they attended their mothers, wives, and sisters in

<sup>1</sup> C. W. Birnie, "The Education of the Negro in Charleston, S.C., before the Civil War," *Journal of Negro History*, XII, 17-18.



the second tier, reserved exclusively for them, and where no white person of either sex would have been permitted to intrude. But they were not admitted to the quadroom balls, and when white gentlemen visited their families it was the accepted etiquette for them never to be present. . . .<sup>1</sup>

It was among the free Negroes that family traditions were first built up and transmitted to succeeding generations. Descendants of families originating in the free communities described above are scattered over the country today. In the cities of the North are many descendants of free families that left the South before the Civil War when the restrictions upon this class became intolerable. The record of a free mulatto community in the North with traditions extending back to the seventeenth century portrays the rôle of these free families in the history of the Negro group. According to the tradition, this mulatto community originated with the marriage of the granddaughter of John Fenwick who, having acquired from Lord Berkeley a tract of land in New Jersey, came to America in 1675.<sup>2</sup> Although there is

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Negro History*, II, 181-84. From Charles Gayarre's unpublished manuscript on the "People of Color in Louisiana" in Grace King, *New Orleans, the Place and People*, pp. 346-49.

<sup>2</sup> William Steward and Theophilus G. Steward, *Gouldtown, a Very Remarkable Settlement of Ancient Date* (Philadelphia, 1913), pp. 50-51. "Among the numerous troubles and vexations which assailed Fenwick, none appear to have distressed him more than the base and abandoned conduct of his granddaughter, Elizabeth Adams, who had attached herself to a citizen of color. By his will he deprives her of any share in his estate, 'unless the Lord open her eyes to see her abominable transgression against him, me and her good father, by giving her true repentance and forsaking that Black which hath been the ruin of her and becoming penitent for her sins.' From this illicit connection have sprung the families of the Goulds at a settlement called Gouldtown, in Cumberland County. Later, this same historian in a memoir of John Fenwick wrote: 'Elizabeth Adams had formed a connection with a negro man whose name was Gould' " (R. G. Johnson, *Memoir of John Fenwick*, in *New Jersey Historical Society* [published, 1849]).

no record of the life of Fenwick's granddaughter with her Negro husband, the Gouldtown graveyard register tells the location of their son and his wife.<sup>1</sup> The Gouldtown settlement comprised three other families of mulatto and Indian extraction.

Tradition says that the Pierces originated from two mulattoes who were brought here in a vessel from the West Indies, with which the Colony had early trade, vessels from the West Indies arriving at Greenwich and also coming up as far as to what is now Bridgeton. These two men were Richard and Anthony Pierce, brothers. . . . Anthony and Richard Pierce paid the passage of two Dutch women, sisters, from Holland; their names were Marie and Hannah Van Aca. The last name speedily degenerated into Wanaca, and was made the Christian name of a son of one of them. From these descended all the Pierces of Gouldtown. They came to the colony of West New Jersey before the middle of the eighteenth century.

The Murrays originated in Cape May; they claim an Indian ancestry. The first Murray of whom there is trace in the vicinity of the earliest settlements of Gouldtown, was Othniel Murray. He claimed to be a Lenapee or Siconessee Indian, and came from Cape May County. The Lenapees resided in the locality of Cohansey (or Bridgeton) and had quite a settlement at what became known as the Indian Fields, at a run still known as the Indian Field Run. This Othniel Murray married Katharine (last name unknown), a Swede. They had five children, three sons and two daughters, Mark Murray, David Murray, and John Murray, and Mary Murray and Dorcas Murray. From these descended all the Murrays of Gouldtown.<sup>2</sup>

Another family of slave origin became united by marriage with the three original families.

The Cuff family was of slave origin, though in a time quite remote; Cuff, a slave, was owned by a man named Padgett. Padgett had three daughters, and he, by some means, got into the Continental Army, in the French and Indian War, and was killed. Cuff took care of the widow, and she finally married him. He was called "Cuffee Padgett";

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>2</sup> Steward and Steward, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

they had three sons, and when these went to school they were taunted by the other boys as being the sons of "Old Cuffee Padgett"; so they would have their father drop the Padgett and take the name of Cuffee Cuff. The names of these sons were Mordecai, Reuben, and Seth.<sup>1</sup>

In the early days two separate communities with their own church, school, and social customs maintained a certain social distance, tracing their descent back to the Gould and Pierce families.<sup>2</sup> But the outstanding tradition among the Goulds was their relationship to the founder of the colony.<sup>3</sup> Included in the traditions in this settlement is a record of services in all the wars of the nation, with the exception of the Mexican War, from the Revolution to the Spanish-American War.<sup>4</sup> Although the religious traditions<sup>5</sup> of this settlement were originally different from those of the masses of Negroes who were chiefly influenced by the Baptists and Methodists, descendants of families in this settlement played a conspicuous part in the history of the African Methodist

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64-66.

<sup>3</sup> One of the historians of this family writes that the "Gould's tradition a hundred years ago was 'We descended from Lord Fenwick.'" "The writer of this, now over three score and ten years of age, has heard the words from his grandparents, and other of the Goulds who were born and lived in the close of the eighteenth century" (*ibid.*, p. 37).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 154-56. Descendants from these families also served in the World War.

<sup>5</sup> "Like most others of this section of New Jersey, the inhabitants of Gouldtown held to the Calvinistic doctrines, with a leaning towards Presbyterianism. Indeed, their early religious training was received from the Presbyterians. It is not unlikely that the first Benjamin Gould listened to the religious admonitions of Rev. Daniel Elmer, who came from Connecticut and was installed pastor of the church at New England town (now known as Old Stone Church) in 1729. The records of this old church were lost by a fire which destroyed the church. The earliest Goulds, as well as the Pierces and Murrays, attended this church under the administrations of Rev. Daniel Elmer; he died in 1755, the same year that Elisha, the youngest son of Benjamin Gould, the Founder, was born" (*ibid.*, p. 140).

Episcopal church which became the chief church in this community. In 1816 it is recorded that Reuben Cuff of the Cuff family, whose origin is given above, married into the Gould family and was one of the organizers of the African Methodist church in Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup> While it is impossible to catalogue the descendants of these free families, some idea of their influence in the development of Negro life is afforded by the fact that when the annual reunion was celebrated in 1910, there were two hundred and twenty-three living descendants from one grandson of Benjamin Gould I, whose mother was the granddaughter of John Fenwick.<sup>2</sup> Their place in the history of the Negro is summarized by a distinguished descendant, himself an army chaplain and historian.

Several of the earlier Goulds and Pierces as well as Murrays intermarried with whites, and members of their immediate offspring went away and lost their identity, they and their descendants becoming white; while, from those who still maintained their identity as people of color, there have come many who have reached distinction, and in whom their native County shows merited pride, as, for instance, a Methodist bishop, a chaplain in the United States regular army, a physician, a lawyer, a distinguished dentist, teachers, writers, journalists; and in the industrial arts, carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, painters, carriage builders, woolen spinners and weavers; brickmakers, machinists, engineers, electricians, printers, factory men, sailors, ministers of the Gospel, and farmers; in fact none of its sister villages has produced—taking equality of environment—more or better or more creditable individualities than has this settlement.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-12. "If the writers of this book should attempt to write to all their living relatives, they would write addresses to every State in the Union nearly, to most of the principal cities in the country and several of the larger ones in the Dominion of Canada. They would also direct to London, Liverpool, Paris, Berlin, and Antwerp" (*ibid.*, p. 221).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.



The golden wedding anniversaries, those passed over unnoticed as well as those which have been the occasion for four or five generations of descendants to gather around the ancestral landmarks, indicate the complete assimilation of the highest ideals of family life.<sup>1</sup> The story of this free group of Negro families has been repeated in different sections of the country. If their records are not as complete or their achievements as celebrated, their leavening power in the masses of Negroes has not been unfelt.

During slavery, contacts between the free Negroes and the slaves were more or less restricted both in the interest of the slave system and because of the distinctions which the free Negroes themselves observed. Although with the coming of freedom these two groups acquired the same legal status, distinctions continued to exist. In some sections of North Carolina, for example, there was a cleavage between the free "ishy" and the new "ishy."<sup>2</sup> An ex-slave wrote: "So bitter was the feeling in Kansas in March, 1864, that those who became free by the war were called in derision by the freeborns, 'contraband.'"<sup>3</sup> In Charleston, South

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221. "As we now close the pages of this humble volume, we send it forth with kindly greetings to all our relatives wherever their eyes may behold it, and to our posterity that the love of the home life—the family life and all its sacred ties—the love of the old home and its traditions may be cherished and fostered, prospered and improved upon, and the sterling qualities of our forbears as we now recall them, recount, and look back upon them, may be intensified in the coming generations.

"To look back for two centuries on the name which founds this community and be able to say in general terms, that it is a name unsmirched in the court annals of this county by crime, or by a drunkard or a pauper, is a heritage in which any community might rejoice, however poor it may be in material wealth."

<sup>2</sup> David Dodge, "The Free Negroes of North Carolina," *Atlantic Monthly*, LVII, 20-30.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Clay Bruce, *The New Man. Twenty-nine Years a Slave. Twenty-nine Years a Free Man* (York, Pa., 1895), p. 79.



Carolina, and New Orleans, especially, the differences between the two classes were too marked to permit the newly emancipated slaves and the free Negroes to enter into sympathetic relationships.<sup>1</sup> Although in some cases the distinctions between the two groups rested upon superficial differences in economic and social status, in many cases it amounted to the difference between civilization and semi-barbarism. Free Negro families, originating in the North as well as in the South, furnished many of the political, religious, and educational leaders of the freedmen.<sup>2</sup>

The stabilization of life after the Civil War did not proceed without struggle and conflict. This was true in the establishment of new economic relationships as well as in the working out of political adjustments, about which most interest in the Reconstruction period usually centers. When the political and civil rights of the Negroes were no longer supported by the federal government, many of the political leaders and other educated Negroes migrated to border and northern cities where they could enjoy a status more in harmony with their conceptions of life.<sup>3</sup> Those leaders who remained in the South turned their attention to business enterprises and the education of the masses. The Negro schools in the South, especially those supported by northern philanthropy, have been the centers of culture for the small élite and the more ambitious and energetic in the Negro population. In some cases these schools have been patronized largely by mulatto families with a background of culture

<sup>1</sup> A mulatto born free in Charleston before the Civil War remarked recently to the writer that it was only through the disfranchisement of the colored people that these two groups were brought together.

<sup>2</sup> Carter G. Woodson, *A Century of Negro Migrations*, pp. 123-28.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. viii.

and economic competency. Graduates from these schools, both those who have come from the higher cultural levels in the Negro population and those who have thrown off the ignorance and uncouthness of the masses, have gone into every section of the South and even the North and West. They have formed the small nucleus in the towns of the South and the cities of the North within which family traditions have been built up and standards of conduct enforced. Isolated from both the whites and the surrounding mass of Negroes, they have fought desperately to conserve the superior status which education, property, and family have given them.

The majority of the Negro population has become accommodated to a modified form of the plantation system. At the opening of the present century over four-fifths of the Negroes in the South still lived in rural communities. Three-fourths of the farmers were tenants leading a precarious existence. Political power has been entirely in the hands of the whites.<sup>1</sup> For his stock, seed, and supplies the Negro farmer has been dependent upon the white landlord.<sup>2</sup> Family life among this class has rested upon sympathetic relationships which developed in the one-room log cabin, reminiscent of slavery.

The dwelling-house is an ordinary log-cabin, twenty feet square, the chimney built of sticks and dabbed over with mud; then there is a separate kitchen, which, in architectural design, is a miniature of the house—in size approaches a chicken-coop—and is really ridiculous

<sup>1</sup> Even in an isolated community like St. Helena Island where the majority of the Negro farmers are landowners, political power is entirely in the hands of twenty white voters (T. J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* [New York, 1930], pp. 8-9).

<sup>2</sup> Charles S. Johnson, *The Negro in American Civilization* (New York, 1930), pp. 128-29.

in its pretentiousness. Off to one side are the out-houses, consisting of a diminutive stable, barely large enough to pack a small mule in, and a corn-crib and fodderhouse, equally imposing.<sup>1</sup>

Progress toward economic independence and stability has been indicated in the increase of farm ownership which reached its maximum of about 25 per cent in 1900.<sup>2</sup> Among Negro farm owners family life has tended to assume an institutional character, especially where two or three generations have owned the land. The father's position in the family, unlike his doubtful status during slavery, has been firmly established and through his authority discipline has been maintained. These better situated families have played a dominant rôle in the institutional life of their communities as leaders and supporters of local churches and as promoters of better educational facilities for Negroes. The children from these families have found their way into the educational centers where they have gained a new vision of life. Some have returned to their own communities, while others have sought fulfilment of their awakened ambitions in other fields.

Although the migration of the Negro from the rural South was dramatized by the movement to northern cities during the World War, there has been a steady urbanization of the Negro population since 1900. Fundamental economic forces have been at the bottom of the movement to the cities.<sup>3</sup> From 1900 to 1920 the Negro urban population increased more than a million and a half while the rural population

<sup>1</sup> David C. Barrow, *op. cit.*, p. 832. See also Du Bois, *The Negro American Family*, pp. 50-54. "So far as actual sleeping space goes, the crowding of human beings together in the Black Belt is greater than in the tenement district of large cities like New York. In one black-belt county, out of 1,474 Negro families living in the country district, 761 lived in one room, 560 in two rooms, 93 in three rooms and 60 in four or more rooms. In this county there were 25 persons for every ten rooms of house accommodation, while in the worst tenement districts of New York there are not above 22" (p. 53).

<sup>2</sup> Charles S. Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. ix.

gained only 1 per cent.<sup>1</sup> The movement to cities has continued. The urban population increased 1,634,440 and the rural population decreased 206,428 between 1920 and 1930.<sup>2</sup> Southern cities as well as northern cities have received these migrants.<sup>3</sup> The movement of Negroes from the rural South to cities has probably been the most significant episode in Negro life since emancipation. It has been a flight "from medieval America to modern," and the hurdling of "several generations of experience at a leap."<sup>4</sup>

From emancipation to the opening of the twentieth century there has been a progressive stabilization of Negro family life. With the collapse of the social organization of the ante-bellum South, nearly all that the Negro had achieved in the way of stable and organized family life went to pieces. Remnants of the past were salvaged here and there and became the basis of orderly sex relations under freedom. Among the already free Negroes there was a leavening element with solid family traditions that formed the nucleus for future progress. Since the opening of the twentieth century the steady urbanization of the Negro has set adrift large sections of the population. Customary forms of control have been broken down, and new conceptions of life have been acquired. In the city, especially the northern city, the process of emancipation from the old ways of life has gone farthest. Even the casual student of Negro life has been aware of these changes since emancipation. But by what means shall we measure these processes of disorganization and stabilization of Negro life?

<sup>1</sup> T. J. Woofter, *Negro Problems in Cities* (New York, 1928), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Release from the United States Census Bureau, August 20, 1931.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29. "From 1910 to 1920, . . . the Negro city population increased 875,000 and the rural population actually decreased 240,000."

<sup>4</sup> Alain Locke, *The New Negro* (New York, 1927), pp. 3-6.





PART II

STATISTICS ON THE FAMILY AND MAR-  
RIAGE RELATIONSHIPS OF NEGROES



# CHAPTER IV

## THE NEGRO FAMILY PORTRAYED IN STATISTICS

If one turns to the census for a quantitative statement of those changes in the Negro family which have been described in the preceding chapter, one is impressed first by the changes in the marital status of the Negro population

TABLE II

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE NEGRO POPULATION FIFTEEN YEARS  
OF AGE AND OVER BY SEX, ACCORDING TO MARITAL STATUS  
FOR THE UNITED STATES, 1890-1930

Class of Population and Census Year	Single	Married	Widowed	Divorced
Negro males:				
1930.....	32.2	59.8	6.3	1.4
1920.....	32.6	60.4	5.9	0.8
1910.....	35.4	57.2	6.2	0.7
1900.....	39.2	54.0	5.7	0.4
1890.....	39.8	55.5	4.3	0.2
Negro females:				
1930.....	23.3	58.5	15.9	2.2
1920.....	24.1	59.6	14.8	1.3
1910.....	26.6	57.2	14.8	1.1
1900.....	29.9	53.7	15.4	0.8
1890.....	30.0	54.6	14.7	0.5

since 1890.<sup>1</sup> The increase in the proportion of married persons, both male and female, in the Negro population might suggest a growth in conventional sex relations. But the same apparent tendency of a larger proportion of the population

<sup>1</sup> The most comprehensive and at the same time most critical analysis of statistics dealing with marital relations of Negroes has been made by Professor William F. Ogburn in a recent volume (Ernest R. Groves and William F. Ogburn, *American Marriage and Family Relationships* [New York, 1928]).

to marry is observable for the whites.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the increase in the proportion of whites and Negroes married is accounted for largely by the change in the age distribution of the population since 1890. In 1930 both races were composed of a larger proportion of persons between thirty-five and fifty-four years of age—the age group in which most married persons are found—than in 1890.<sup>2</sup>

The small increase of less than 2 per cent since 1890 in the proportion of the Negro population married, and the close correspondence between the statistics for whites and Negroes, might lead one to conclude that no fundamental changes had taken place in the marital condition of the Negro population and that there was no difference between the two races in respect to conjugal relations. But if the account given of marital conditions among Negroes on a plantation in Louisiana at the opening of the present century is typical of plantation Negroes, these statistics not only obscure differences between whites and Negroes but also conceal the variations in the sex mores of the different sections of the Negro population. An observer reported that:

Legal marriage is not considered absolutely necessary. Of 40 couples at Cinclare who reported themselves as married, and who were known well by the head overseer, only 20 were legally married in the church or by the civil authorities. This would indicate that only 50 per cent of the married persons, so reported, were legally married. Those who have had long experience with the Negroes of the plantation state that even this figure is too high. Cohabitation is the rule. Even when

<sup>1</sup> For the whites the percentage of the population married increased from 55.3 in 1890 to 59.9 in 1920 (*ibid.*, p. 151).

<sup>2</sup> Professor Ogburn has calculated what would have been the proportion of the white and Negro population married in 1920 if the same age distribution had existed in 1920 as that in 1890. It was found that the increase in the percentage married would have been for the whites and Negroes only 1.4 and 1.5, respectively (Groves and Ogburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 162, 165).

they are legally married (and this is generally done after a period of cohabitation and under religious excitement), they soon forget their vows and, if the impulse strikes them, they separate and live with someone more to their liking. Numerous cases are seen of two persons legally married and yet each living with a different person and reporting as being married to the second. A legal divorce is practically unknown among the plantation Negroes. For all these reasons too much stress must not be laid on the figures on the conjugal condition of the Negroes of Cinclare and Calumet; and yet they are thought to be representative of the plantation Negroes of the far South.<sup>1</sup>

In striking contrast to the above account of the conjugal relations of Negroes on the plantation are the descriptions of stable family life in other communities. A survey of the Negro population in Xenia, Ohio, showed that 63.5 per cent of the families owned their homes. In this community, where about one-half of the population was mulatto, homes had been inherited in some cases through three generations, and definite class distinctions were based partly upon a tradition of free ancestry in the best families.<sup>2</sup> A similar development of stable family relations has been noted in a recent study of an isolated Negro community, composed chiefly of pure blacks, on St. Helena Island. Among these landowners who regard marriage as a solemn affair, the family is a relatively permanent union.<sup>3</sup>

Statistics on the marital status of the Negro population do not reflect the different levels of social development that exist between the wide extremes presented in the above descriptions of family life. Some indication, however, of the

<sup>1</sup> J. Bradford Law, *The Negroes of Cinclare Central Factory and Calumet Plantation, Louisiana*, Department of Labor, Bulletin No. 38 (January, 1902), pp. 102-3.

<sup>2</sup> Richard R. Wright, Jr., *The Negroes of Xenia, Ohio: A Social Study*, Bureau of Labor, Bulletin No. 48 (September, 1903).

<sup>3</sup> T. J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* (New York, 1930), pp. 205-7.



influence of customary behavior in sex relations is given in the statistics for the proportion of Negroes who have married during their early years. It appears that there is a decided tendency on the part of Negroes to marry early, for we find that nearly one-third of them between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four are married, whereas among the whites of the same age group only about a fifth are married.<sup>1</sup> This tendency is only slightly less marked in the case of urban Negroes than among rural Negroes.<sup>2</sup> But the South, urban as well as rural, has a larger proportion of its married Negro population in this early age period than any other section of the country.<sup>3</sup> The census statistics give no further indication of the influence of city life on the marital relations of the Negro population other than that it tends to decrease the proportion married. Analysis of these figures indicates that 9 per cent more of the rural than of the urban population is married.<sup>4</sup>

Less adequate as indexes of the actual marital relations

<sup>1</sup> Groves and Ogburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-25. On St. Helena Island Woofert found that 94 per cent of the women were married by the time they were twenty-five (*op. cit.*, p. 208).

<sup>2</sup> Groves and Ogburn, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235. These differences are due to influences other than differences in age and sex distribution.

<sup>4</sup> Groves and Ogburn, *op. cit.*, p. 307. "As regards the Negro, there are only 3.2 per cent more of the rural population married than of the urban; but when the age distribution is the same in both city and country for the Negro, there are 9 per cent more of the rural population reported married than of the urban, the percentage of the rural population married being 65 per cent and the urban 56 per cent. When the rural Negroes and the urban Negroes have the same age distribution as the whole population of the United States, we find rather larger percentages of rural Negroes married and rather smaller percentages of urban Negroes married. In other words the effect of city life on Negro marriage appears to be a little more marked than on the other racial nativity groups."

in the Negro population are the statistics on the widowed. The large percentage of widowed in the Negro population has long been the subject of comment and observation.<sup>1</sup> One out of every five or six Negro women is recorded in the census as widowed.<sup>2</sup> An explanation of this large number of widowed among the Negro population has been that a high death-rate is coupled with the tendency of the young Negroes to marry and the opposite tendency of the older Negroes not to marry.<sup>3</sup> It seems probable that the high percentage of widowed is due partly to separation and other irregular relations which have been reported as widowhood.<sup>4</sup>

The frequency of divorces among Negroes should, it

<sup>1</sup> See Woofter, *op. cit.*, p. 91. In the case of St. Helena Island the disproportionate number of widows in the population is due partly to migration. It seems, however, that the presence of a large number of widows is associated with the fact that there are very few Negroes over forty-five years of age who have never been married. "Old maids," writes Woofter, "are practically unknown" (p. 208). This seems to be characteristic of the Negro population as a whole. See Groves and Ogburn, *op. cit.*, pp. 336-37.

<sup>2</sup> Groves and Ogburn, *op. cit.*, p. 319. If adjustments were made so that the age distribution of the Negro population was the same as for the country as a whole the percentage of Negro women who are widowed would be 18.1 per cent.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>4</sup> An analysis of the 1900 census gave indication of inaccurate reporting. "Among 1,000 negroes at least 15 years of age, 345 are single and 539 are married, while among 1,000 whites of the same age, 14 more are single and 20 more are married, the total difference of 34 being almost balanced by the fact that among the negroes 31 more in each 1,000 are widowed than among the whites. The relatively short life of the negro population would lead one to expect a rather large number of this class, but the difference between the two races seems to be too great to be accounted for in that way. One is disposed to believe that no small number of the 565,430 negro widows or widowers were persons whose conjugal relations had been ended by separation rather than by death and whose conjugal condition, therefore, has been inaccurately described" (*Negroes in the United States*, Bureau of the Census, Bulletin No. 8 [Washington, 1904], p. 48).

would seem, throw some light on the stability of family relations. At one time it was thought that divorces among Negroes were responsible for the majority of the divorces in the South.<sup>1</sup> But Professor Walter Willcox pointed out that "an a priori argument against the opinion quoted may be derived from what is known of divorce in other parts of the world. It is not the poorest and most ignorant classes that frequent the divorce courts: their poverty and ignorance prevent."<sup>2</sup> A more decisive and inductive argument against the opinion that Negroes contributed most of the divorces in the South was the fact that "in all the states but Arkansas the divorce-rate was less in the black counties than in the white."<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, it seemed reasonable that in the counties predominantly white, where there was a strict enforcement of laws regarding marital relations, the divorce-rate might have been swelled by the black litigants.

The increase since 1890 in the percentage of the Negro population reported divorced appears to confirm Professor Willcox's conclusion twenty years ago that, "on the whole, it seems probable that the average negro divorce-rate is rather below that of the southern whites, but is increasing much more rapidly, and in a few localities or states may have already reached or passed it."<sup>4</sup> At the same time, if it

<sup>1</sup> The annual reports by the United States Bureau of the Census do not separate the divorce statistics for the Negroes. Although instructions were given originally to secure the color of the litigants, this information was so scanty that it made separate statistics for the Negroes impossible (*Marriage and Divorce, 1867-1906*, Part I, Bureau of the Census [Washington, 1909], p. 20).

<sup>2</sup> Walter F. Willcox, *The Divorce Problem. A Study in Statistics. Studies in History, Economics and Public Law*, I (New York, 1897), 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32. Professor Ogburn's analysis of the census statistics for 1920 indicates that Negroes tend to seek divorce more frequently than whites, who

is true that Negroes are seeking divorces more frequently than formerly, this fact may indicate that the family is receiving greater recognition as a legal and institutional relationship in Negro life. The larger proportion of divorced persons which is found in the urban Negro population as compared with the rural population is characteristic of the population of the country as a whole.

#### SIZE OF THE NEGRO FAMILY

All available statistics seem to indicate that since emancipation there has been a decrease in the size of the Negro family. The number of children under five years to each 1,000 Negro females, fifteen to forty-four years of age, declined from 641 in 1870 to 543 in 1900.<sup>1</sup> Since 1890 the average size of the Negro family, or more correctly, household, has declined from 5.3 to 4.5 persons, the same as that for the country as a whole.<sup>2</sup> However, Negro women at all ages, except those fifty and over, have had a larger number of children on the average than white women, native or foreign-born. For example, Negro women of forty-five to forty-nine years of age who became mothers in 1927 had

---

show variations for foreign and native born. He has calculated the average percentages of the males and females divorced for Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, Maryland, and Texas. The percentages for the Negro males and females were 1.21 and 1.68, respectively. He has also attempted to measure the tendency in the racial populations to seek divorce by getting the ratio of divorced persons to persons twenty-five years of age and over, single and widowed, for the same five states. The ratio for the Negroes was 7.02 or 1.57 as large as that for the native whites of native parents which was the second highest group (Groves and Ogburn, *op. cit.*, p. 372).

<sup>1</sup> Du Bois, *The Negro American Family*, p. 32. The following table indicates the decline in the proportion of children to Negro women of child-bearing

[Footnote 1 continued on following page]

<sup>2</sup> See Table II, Appendix B.



had on the average of 10 children each, while the native white mothers of the same age had had on the average of 8.7 children and the foreign-born women 9.3 children. The

TABLE III

AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN TO WOMEN WHO BORE  
CHILDREN IN 1927, BY AGE OF MOTHER, IN THE REGISTRATION  
AREA IN CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES\*

Country of Birth of Mother	All Ages	Under 20	20 to 24	25 to 29	30 to 34	35 to 39	40 to 44	45 to 49	50 and over	Un- known
White.....	3.2	1.2	1.9	2.9	4.1	5.7	7.4	8.9	7.3	3.3
United States..	3.1	1.2	1.9	2.9	4.1	5.6	7.3	8.7	6.8	3.3
Foreign...	3.9	1.3	1.9	2.8	4.3	6.1	7.8	9.3	9.5	4.1
Negro.....	3.7	1.3	2.5	4.2	5.8	7.5	9.2	10.0	8.7	3.8

\* Exclusive of Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island.

larger number of children born to foreign-born women of fifty and over raised the average for them as a whole slightly above that of the entire group of Negro mothers.

ing age over a period of ninety years as compared with the white women for the same period.

YEAR	TOTAL	WOMEN FOURTEEN TO FORTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE	CHILDREN UNDER FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE		
			Number	Percentage of Total	Per 1,000 Women Fourteen to Forty-four
Negro Population					
1910.....	9,827,763	2,553,098	3,430,559	34.9	1,344
1900.....	8,833,994	2,193,684	3,298,760	37.3	1,504
1820.....	1,771,656	411,110	761,753	43.0	1,853
White Population					
1910.....	81,731,957	20,061,647	24,109,893	29.5	1,202
1900.....	66,809,196	16,243,198	21,166,188	31.7	1,303
1820.....	7,866,797	1,718,570*	3,435,228*	43.7*	1,999*

\* Estimate. *Negro Population, 1790-1915*, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 1918, p. 283.



A declining birth-rate and a high infant mortality in the Negro population had tended to reduce the size of the Negro family. From 1921 to 1927 the Negro birth-rate declined from 27.9 to 25.0 for the entire country. The decline in the Negro birth-rate has taken place chiefly in the rural population, while in the urban areas it has increased for several years during this period.<sup>1</sup> The infant death-rate among Negroes continues high in spite of the decrease since 1920. In 1927 one-tenth of the Negro children born died before they were one year of age. Moreover, Negro women who gave birth to children during that year had only 86.7 per cent of their children living as compared with 91.4 per cent for native white mothers.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the whole the Negro population, according to Whelpton, is becoming stationary (P. K. Whelpton, "Population. Trends in Differentials of True Increase and Age Composition," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXXV, 873). Three explanations have been offered to account for the increase in the Negro birth-rate in northern cities. "In the first place," writes Thompson, "it may be that the movement of Negroes into the North, particularly into the northern cities, has been more rapid than the census estimates indicate, with the result that their birth rates are calculated on too small a base. In other words, the higher rate may not indicate a real increase in fertility but only that the births are attributed to too small a population. Where the numbers dealt with are rather small and migration is relatively large, this is certainly a possibility. In the second place, the age composition of the Negro women in the North may have been so changed by the rapid influx of young people that this population would have a higher birth rate now than in 1920, even though the birth rates per thousand women at each age are no greater than formerly. Finally, it may be that the fertility of Negro women has actually increased because of the fact that the Negroes in our northern cities are becoming more settled and feel better able to raise families than they did when they arrived. To the author, the last of these reasons seems the least probable, but again only a census will surely tell" (Warren S. Thompson, "Recent Changes in the Birth Rate and Their Significance for Child Welfare," *The Annals*, CLI, 28).

<sup>2</sup> *Birth, Stillbirth, and Infant Mortality Statistics: 1927*, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 1929, p. 17.

The influence of these factors, the declining birth-rate and the infant death-rate, is not the same in all sections of the Negro population. Kelly Miller's study of the fifty-five colored teachers—forty-one men and fourteen women—at Howard University gives us an indication of the decline among the relatively small professional classes. These teachers came from families averaging 6.3 children. While the entire group averaged over thirty years of age, the twenty-two married persons among them had on the average 1.6 children. Four of the families were barren, four had 1 child

TABLE IV  
PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HOMES OF NEGRO FAMILIES  
ACCORDING TO CLASS OF HOME AND PROPRIETORSHIP

CENSUS	ALL HOMES		FARM HOMES		OTHER HOMES	
	Owned	Rented	Owned	Rented	Owned	Rented
1920*	23.8	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
1910.....	23.3	76.7	25.2	74.8	22.0	78.0
1900.....	21.7	78.3	25.4	74.6	19.0	81.0
1890.....	18.7	81.3	22.0	78.0	16.7	83.3

\* Southern states only.

each, and only one family had as many as 6 children. The restriction of the size of the family in this group was attributed by Kelly Miller to social restraint because of color prejudice; higher standards of living; and delayed education in the first generation of free Negroes.<sup>1</sup>

#### HOME OWNERSHIP

The increase in home ownership since emancipation has been an indication of the growing stability of the Negro

<sup>1</sup> Kelly Miller, "Eugenics of the Negro Race," *Scientific Monthly*, V, 57-59.

family. From 1890 to 1900 there was an increase of 3 per cent in the number of Negro families owning their homes. Since 1900 home ownership among rural Negro families has remained stationary, while the proportion of Negro families owning their homes in southern cities has steadily increased. Up to 1910 home ownership among Negro families in the North had not kept pace with the increase in population. The increase in home ownership in the North has appeared since the migrations during the war period.<sup>1</sup>

#### ILLEGITIMACY

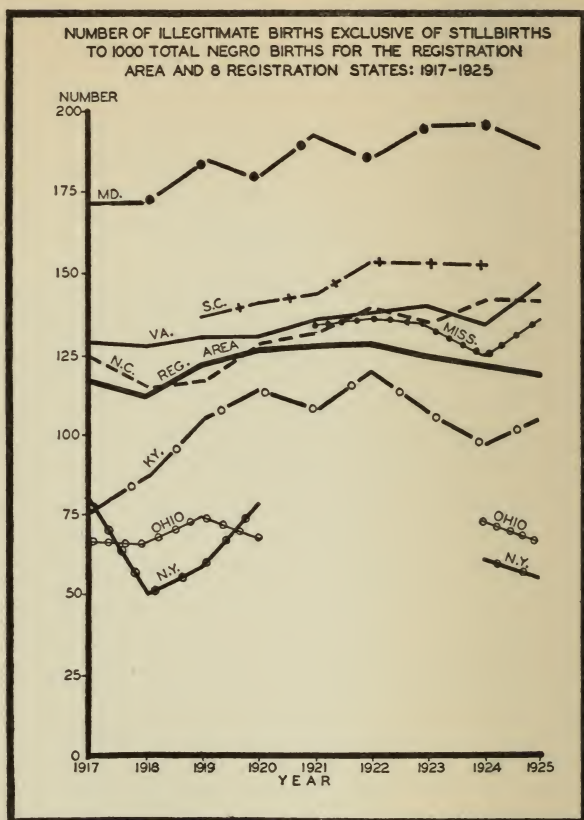
The high rate of illegitimacy in the Negro population, we saw in the first chapter, was pointed to by several writers as the chief evidence of the demoralization of the Negro family. It has been very difficult to get a correct measure of this type of family disorganization in the Negro group. Statistics for illegitimacy in the Negro population as a whole have fluctuated considerably.<sup>2</sup> From 1917 to 1922 there was a trend upward. After 1922 the illegitimacy rate decreased for several years but rose again to 136.6 per thousand births in 1928. The states in the Registration Area have shown considerable differences. Maryland has had a consistently high rate for the twelve years period from 1917 to 1928. Nearly one-fifth of the births in that state were reported as illegitimate. On the other hand, Michigan has had a comparatively low rate. The difference between urban and rural communities has not been the same for all states. For example, the rural Negro population in Florida has had a larger illegitimacy rate than the urban population, while in Kentucky the reverse has been true. On the whole, the illegitimacy

<sup>1</sup> T. J. Woofter, *Negro Problems in Cities*, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> See Table III, Appendix B.

rate in northern states has been lower than in southern states.

CHART I

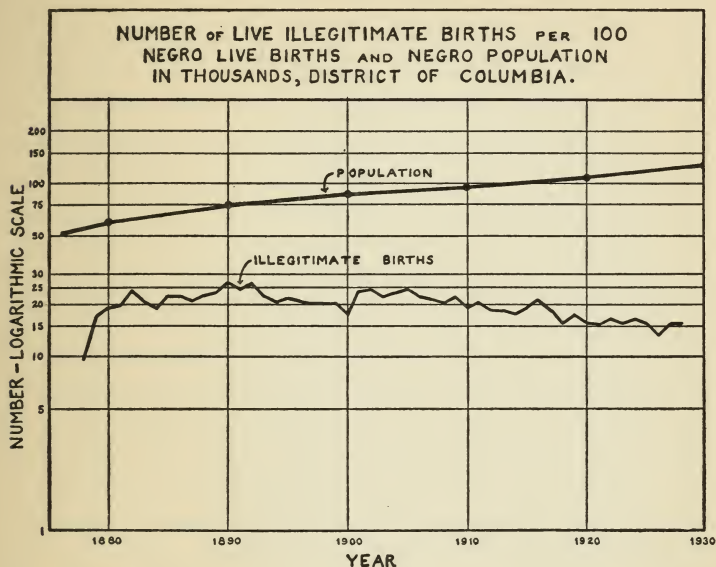


In the case of the District of Columbia we have statistics on Negro illegitimacy since 1878.<sup>1</sup> During the fifty-one years from 1878 to 1928 the illegitimacy rate has remained for

<sup>1</sup> Shannon, *The Negro in Washington*, pp. 90-92.

most of the period around 20 per cent (Chart II). There was a distinct upward trend in the rate between 1870 and 1890 when large numbers of Negroes were migrating into the District. During these two decades when the Negro population increased over 80 per cent, the illegitimacy rate

CHART II



Based upon statistics furnished by the District of Columbia Health Department, and the complete table of statistics from the same source on Negro illegitimacy in the District of Columbia in *The Negro in Washington*, by A. H. Shannon (New York, 1930), pp. 91-92.

rose from 10 to 26 per cent. During the next ten years it decreased about 8 per cent, only to rise again during the first half of the next decade. But since 1900 the illegitimacy rate has tended to decrease as the Negro population has increased at a slower rate. Apparently, the high illegitimacy



among the Negroes in the District of Columbia has resulted largely from the social disorganization which has followed the migration of Negroes, especially from the South, to the capital.

Throughout this chapter the inadequacy of available statistics as a measure of the changes in the Negro family has been apparent. The important changes which have taken place in the Negro population since the migration of large numbers to cities are only vaguely reflected in the slight differences shown in statistics for urban and rural areas. Moreover, the fundamental differences in the levels of culture represented in the Negro population are blurred in statistics for large masses of the population, and only a picture of average conditions is presented. Not all sections of the population have been affected in the same way by the change from country to city. Life in the city has a different significance for the plantation Negro suddenly transplanted to the metropolis from what it has for the college graduate who, failing to realize his ambitions in a southern town, follows the migrating masses to the North. In order that these differences can become accented it is necessary to break up the Negro population into small enough units for detailed analysis. For this reason we have chosen the city of Chicago where the whole panorama of Negro life is compact enough to be studied intensively, and, as it spreads itself over a vast territory, reveals these contrasts in clear outlines.

PART III

THE NEGRO FAMILY IN AN URBAN  
COMMUNITY



## CHAPTER V

### WHEN THE NEGRO FAMILY MOVES TO THE CITY

If, as we have seen in the last chapter, statistics for the United States fail to help us understand the processes of disorganization and reorganization of Negro family life, What does one find when one studies at closer range the Negro family in Chicago with its Negro population of over a hundred thousand? It was to this city that more than a tenth of the half-million migrants came during the World War and made its Negro population a cross-section of the race in America. What have been the effects upon Negro family life of "the wash and rush of this human tide on the beach line" of a northern city, attracted by "a new vision of opportunity, of social and economic freedom, of a spirit to seize, even at extortionate and heavy toil, a chance for the improvement of conditions"?<sup>1</sup> Does the extortionate and heavy toll of poverty, disease, and immorality mean the extinction of the race or the entrance into a fuller life?<sup>2</sup>

The great influx of Negroes into northern cities during the World War was a dramatic episode in the steady migrations of Negroes to cities. During the decade from 1900 to 1910 the urban population increased 34.1 per cent while rural communities added only 4.6 per cent to their population.<sup>3</sup> Southern cities received most of the migrants during this period. Then came the demand of northern industry

<sup>1</sup> Alain Locke, *The New Negro* (New York, 1925), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> "The Negro Migrations—A Debate," *The Forum*, LXXII, 593-607.

<sup>3</sup> T. J. Wooster, *Negro Problems in Cities* (New York, 1928), pp. 28-30.

for workers to fill the places left vacant in the lower ranks of labor by European immigrants who had moved up in the industrial world or gone home to fight. The lure of no northern city was as irresistible for the black hordes from the South as "Chicago in the West, known far and wide for its colossal abattoirs, whose placarded warehouses, set close by the railroad, dotted every sizable town of the South, calling for men; Chicago, remembered for the fairyland wonders of the World's Fair; home of the fearless, taunting 'race paper,' and above all things, of mills clamoring for men."<sup>1</sup>

While the tide of Negro migration from the South became a folk movement involving many families,<sup>2</sup> it tended on the whole to select those who were in the most productive years of their lives. This is reflected in the age distribution of the Negro population in Chicago in 1930. Although the proportion of persons under twenty in the Negro population was six times as large as in the foreign-born group, the settled native white population had nearly twice as large a proportion of young persons as the Negro. In the Negro population as in the foreign-born population the majority of the persons were between the ages of twenty and forty-four. But the proportion of older persons in the Negro group was less than half as large as the proportion in the foreign group and tended to conform to the native whites.

The migration to Chicago of large numbers of men and

<sup>1</sup> Charles S. Johnson, "The New Frontage on American Life" in *The New Negro*, edited by Alain Locke (New York, 1925), p. 278.

<sup>2</sup> *The Negro in Chicago*, edited by the Chicago Commission on Race Relations (Chicago, 1922), p. 93. Observation of the migrants as they came to Chicago showed that "a significant feature was the large number of young children found. The age distribution of 128 children in these seventy-five families was forty-seven under seven years, forty-one between seven and fourteen years, and forty over fourteen years."



women between twenty and forty-four naturally affected the marital condition of the population. These changes were not only apparent for the decade in which the World War occurred but have been reflected in the changes in the marital status of the Negro population since 1890. When the migrations, coming chiefly from the border states during

TABLE V

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF NATIVE WHITE, FOREIGN-BORN WHITE,  
AND NEGRO POPULATION, BY SEX, FOR SPECIFIED AGE  
PERIODS IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 1930

AGE	NATIVE WHITE		FOREIGN-BORN WHITE		NEGRO	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Under 20.....	44.4	43.5	3.8	4.5	26.5	28.1
20-44.....	42.2	42.8	51.8	51.1	56.2	56.3
45—.....	13.3	13.6	44.3	44.3	17.1	15.4
Unknown.....	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

the decade from 1890 to 1900, caused the population to double itself, there was a decrease in the percentages of married and single males and females, which was compensated for by the increase in the percentage of widowed. During the first decade of the present century, when the tide of migration slowed down, there was a substantial decrease in the percentage of single Negroes and a corresponding increase in the proportion of married, widowed, and divorced. When the migration came largely from the lower South during the war and swelled the Negro population nearly 150 per cent for the next decade, the change in the marital condition of the population was noticeable especially in an in-

crease in the proportion of married persons and a decrease in the unmarried population.

There were also observable fluctuations during these three decades in the proportion of Negro families who owned their homes. One of the apparent effects of the migrations during the last decade of the nineteenth century was a decrease

TABLE VI

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE NEGRO POPULATION IN CHICAGO  
FIFTEEN YEARS OF AGE AND OVER ACCORDING TO MARITAL  
STATUS AT EACH DECENNIAL CENSUS, 1890-1920\*

Census Year and Sex	Single	Married	Widowed	Divorced
1920:				
Males.....	34.4	58.1	6.3	0.9
Females.....	17.6	61.6	18.9	1.5
1910:				
Males.....	39.4	52.0	6.4	1.3
Females.....	21.2	55.6	20.9	2.0
1900:				
Males.....	49.0	44.1	5.8	0.5
Females.....	25.8	51.6	21.2	1.2
1890:				
Males.....	50.9	44.6	3.5	0.4
Females.....	27.9	53.5	17.3	1.1

\* *Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920. Vol. II, Population*, p. 473. *Negro Population, 1790-1915*, Bureau of the Census, p. 275.

in home ownership.<sup>1</sup> During the following ten years when the Negro population increased about 50 per cent there was a gain in home ownership of a little over 1 per cent. And in the next decade, notwithstanding the unparalleled migration of a large body of propertyless peasants from the South, there was an increase in home ownership over the previous decade.

<sup>1</sup> It is of interest to note that although 8.5 per cent of the colored families owned their homes in 1890, home ownership among the mulattoes amounted to 11.2 per cent while for the blacks it was only 7.2 per cent (United States Census, 1890, *Report on Farms and Homes*, XIII, 581).

This unexpected increase in the rate of home ownership during the period of the heaviest migration of the plantation Negro from the South tends to emphasize the inadequacy of these statistics as indexes of the changes which are taking place in the Negro family. Among the thousands who came to Chicago, there were some, to be sure, who represented the

TABLE VII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF NEGRO FAMILIES OWNING HOMES AT EACH DECENNIAL CENSUS IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 1890-1920

	1890		1900*		1910		1920	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Owned . . . . .	247	8.5	362	5.1	662	6.3	1,912	7.4
Rented . . . . .	2,620	91.5	6,649	94.9	9,759	93.7	23,772	92.6
Total . . . . .	2,867	100.0	7,011	100.0	10,421	100.0	25,684	100.0

\* Private families only.

progress which the Negro had made in cultural and economic development in the South. Moreover, the opportunities which the war period offered the energetic and ambitious were seized by the more intelligent and talented to improve their economic and social status. But among the migrants there were thousands of ignorant and impoverished peasant families released from the customary controls of rural southern communities, and solitary men and women who had become demoralized in wandering from city to city. All of these different elements in Negro life have struggled to survive in the stern competition of city life. But these fundamental differences in the Negro population are obscured beneath statistics which give only a picture of average conditions in Negro life.

The movement of the Negro to the city creates a crisis in his life. It means the loss of the intimate association of friends and relatives and the status that he has in the small town or rural community of the South. There was, for example, the woman from Mississippi whose mother had come with her sister from New Orleans to Chicago in 1917, "about the time," as she said, "people was coming in those clubs." She continued:

I think it was about \$15 you paid in a club. My sister and mother came up then. So after awhile they kept on writing for me to come. I come up then and went back and come up again. So my husband say he was coming up but he just fooled us away.

It was, however, against the formal and impersonal relations of the urban life that she protested in her loneliness.

I believe in church work, something I could do good for people. That's what I like—church work. I did want to finish in music but I couldn't, you see. I've always been crazy about music. When I was in the South I was always helping people, but I haven't been doing any of that work up here 'cause B—— Church is too large—it don't see the small people. I belonged to the Phyllis Wheatley Club at home and I was always helping people in my home. I seen lots of my people down here to the Armory. I was well known in my home. I saw quite a few people I knew down there. You see everybody mostly called me "Sister H——." They all knowed me. I was an Eastern Star when I was at home, but since I been here I ain't tried to keep it up. I would try and join a small church where the people would know me. 'Course I don't know so many people here. I been in B—— Church since 1920—went away and came back and joined again. The preacher wouldn't know me, might could call my name in the book, but he wouldn't know me otherwise. Why, at home whenever I didn't come to Sunday School they would always come and see what was the matter. I would even stay away just to see what they would say, and I would say, "Why, wasn't I there?" and then they would say, "No," that they had come to see what was the matter with Sister H——.



'Course I am a good woman and a good natured woman. People crushes me a lot of time but I don't say anything I just go off and cry—just see how some people step on your feet, and crush you.<sup>1</sup>

In the urban environment the migrant is liberated from the control that the church and other forms of association exercised in the rural South. He is released from the gossip of the neighborhood and the fear of being "churched" if he strays into unconventional behavior. Freedom from these controls makes the migrant subject to all the forms of suggestion that the city offers. A woman, who was "partly raised in Birmingham," whither she migrated first from the farm after the death of her mother, said:

I am the onliest one living. I used to go to the high school in Birmingham but I taken sick and had to quit. I went as far as the seventh grade. You see I just got disgusted, 'cause all my people was dead and I had no one in this world. I was all off in the world by myself. Maybe I would have been a better lady in books today if I had gone on to school. And I had an awful smart set of people. I did maid's work. I got religion when I was fourteen years old in the Baptist Church. Well, seemed like I just got sick of the world. Instead of being a bad girl I wanted to be a good girl. You see, my mother was a good Christian woman. My mother said she just left one thing back here between her and God and that was me. I told my girl friend I wanted to change and be a good girl. So I joined the church. Well, I got to running around over the world like young folks will do, you know. Just packed up and got to travelling. I stopped in Memphis and worked there a couple of months. That was in 1913 I think, when I first came to Chicago. Then I went back to Birmingham. From there to Memphis and then here again. I came here in 1917. And then I went to Grand Rapids, Michigan, stayed there awhile. I don't belong to any lodges. I had some insurances, but I dropped it. Times got so hard I just couldn't keep it up. I is only days working now until things brighten up a little. I always been fortunate in having regular

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.



work. I got married when I was in Birmingham. I was twenty-one years old. If I had put my money in good use I would have had some money now. Probably might have been a pretty well-off woman. Well you see, I used to go to cabarets a lot, used to dress and spend plenty of money. When I was in Alabama I had a pretty good bank account and when I came here I had a nice bank account. But I used to go to these all night parties about two or three years ago. I had a beau, I didn't miss it. I was looking good then, you know. That is where my money went 'cause I sho would go to them all night dances. I ain't got no beau now though, because I am broke. I used to go about ten or twelve o'clock and stay there to six or seven o'clock the next morning, then used to go right on to work from there. They used to dance, drink and eat and everything at them parties. Oh, Lord; they just had a house full. When one crew goes, another one come. You see they made money. Well, you buy your own drinks and meals, you know. I loved music all right. I am just sorry I let so much of my time waste up.<sup>1</sup>

The above statement indicates how the Negro in his aimless wandering from city to city loses the conceptions of life which he acquired in the church, the most important institution in the life of the Negro in the South. He loses his old aims and ambitions, and freed from every form of group control he is the prey of vagrant impulses and lawless desires.

Another young woman, on the other hand, whose father was superintendent of the Sunday school in Mississippi, which he had founded and all his family attended, represents the type of migrant who is still controlled to some extent by the habits and attitudes of the rural community. But for such migrants, as in the case of this woman, the city loses much of its glamor when they are thrown in contact with people and situations which are opposed to their way of life. She complained:

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

I don't think Chicago is so progressive. It is on the decrease. I just heard wonders of Chicago but things have certainly changed here. . . . I live at 38— Federal Street. It is a terrible neighborhood over there. We are planning on moving out. They are too rough and rowdy there. I am just not used to living in such a place. You wake up at night and hear all sorts of things going on. The good community parts are further South I believe. Well, some of the people in that neighborhood have been there for a long time—they are real nice people. One family lived there eleven years. They were friends of ours from Mississippi and that's why we moved there because they were home people you know and we thought we could feel protected living near them. Why everything has gone to wreck over there. It is a very nasty district.<sup>1</sup>

"I am very sorry that I ever came to Chicago," reflected another young woman who came to the city at fifteen and became separated from her husband soon after marriage. She continued:

At that time I didn't have any business in Chicago. I saw too much—the elevated—everything. Some things I had never seen before. Well, after a person goes to a large place and sees so much and then goes back to a small town, they are not satisfied. After I came to Chicago I didn't even finish high school. Well, I didn't have much experience. My mother was just—well, I didn't go to dances where I go now. I don't know nothing about West Point, Georgia, no more than I just went to school there, you know. My mother wouldn't even let me work for any white people there. I know the first white woman I worked for here. I never will forget, because she worked me most nigh to death and didn't pay me anything.<sup>2</sup>

It is not surprising that after her experience with life in Chicago she was seeking with considerable misgiving the protection of another husband and the security of a home. Negro men who wander about the country in search of work after leaving the plantation experience a similar disillusionment and often develop a certain cynicism. A young

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> Manuscript document.

man who ran away from his home in Mississippi and worked in gambling houses in Memphis, where he was arrested several times for selling "moonshine," expressed his cynicism toward the teachings of his mother in regard to Christianity.

I have come up pretty tough from twelve years old on up til I got to be a man. I come up hard, you know. Sometimes, I would not know where I could get a piece of bread. Sometimes, you know, I would only have a dime, and say I believe I will git me a sack of tobacco. Then you know, I would sometimes only have a nickle and would git me a sack of tobacco and leave that bread off. Well, you know, Mama always taught me that whenever I was out and down, she would say, "Well, the Christians, honey, you always go up to the Christians and ask them to give you something to eat, and they will." Well, the Christians would always give me good advice but that was all, so I just got so I wouldn't bother with them and whenever I wanted anything I used to make it to the gamblers.<sup>1</sup>

The disillusionment which the Negro suffers at moments during his separation from friends and family becomes the subject of the "blues" improvised according to the mood of these men uprooted from the soil.

In de evenin' de sun am low,  
Dis po' homeless boy got nowhere to go,  
Daddy sick, mammy daid,  
Po' boy got nowhere to lay his haid.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> Howard Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1926), pp. 43-44. Dr. Charles S. Johnson, commenting on the attitude of the new group of Negro poets toward the folk life of the Negro, makes the following statement concerning the "blues": "Who would know something of the core and limitations of this life should go to the Blues. In them is the curious story of disillusionment without a saving philosophy and it without defeat. They mark these narrow limits of life's satisfactions, its vast treacheries and ironies. Stark, full human passions crowd themselves into an uncompelled expression, so simple in their power that they startle" ("Jazz Poetry and Blues," *Fisk Herald*, XXXVI, 15).

It is then he often resolves in his songs to return to the intimate association of the family that he has forgotten in the excitement of the city.

I got a wife, Buddie,  
 With two little children, Buddie,  
 With two little children, Buddie,  
 Tell 'em I'm comin' home, Buddie, I'm comin' home.<sup>1</sup>

Out of the disillusionment and disorganization of life in the urban environment the Negro acquires new conceptions of life. In the mass of Negroes new hopes and ambitions are kindled. These aims and outlook on life mean a complete break with the traditional conceptions that had existed among the mass of Negroes since the days of slavery. During the period of slavery in the South the Negro surrendered the world to the white man and expressed his fatalistic acceptance of life, in a world that was not his own, in his spirituals. In these songs he projected into a future world the fulfilment of his suppressed wishes and concealed aspirations.<sup>2</sup> During the crisis produced by emancipation, many Negroes, set adrift in a strange world, had hoped to realize the dreams and hopes that freedom promised. But emanci-

<sup>1</sup> Odum and Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> "The world, as the African understood it, was full of malignant spirits, diseases and forces with which he was in constant mortal struggle. His religious practices were intended to gain for him immunity in this world, rather than assurance of the next. But the Negro in America was in a different situation. He was not living in his own world. He was a slave and that, aside from the physical inconvenience, implied a vast deal of inhibition. He was, moreover, a constant spectator of life in which he could not participate; excited to actions and enterprises that were forbidden to him because he was a slave. The restlessness which this situation provoked found expression, not in insurrection and rebellion—although, of course, there were Negro insurrections—but in his religion and in his dreams of another and freer world" (Robert E. Park, "The Conflict and Fusion of Cultures with Special Reference to the Negro," *Journal of Negro History*, IV, 128).



pation failed to bring to them the status and freedom in the white man's world that they had expected.

Life in the South became stable once more. New accommodations were made again to a world in which the white man's undisputed superior position was graven in the stones of colossal buildings and whitewashed on the most insignificant shelter by the railroad. The great inarticulate mass of black folk once more accepted their fate with resignation. "Dis is a white man's country, son, you is just a nigger," a washerwoman replied when the school teacher announced that he was going to an officers' training camp during the World War. On the other hand, the Negro lived in the world of his folk culture. Once or twice a month he spent the day in church where he gave rein to his emotions. "Chile, I went to church and shouted all I wanted to," one woman, recalling one of these Sunday meetings, would boast to another. There was the general rejoicing at Christmas time, when the landlord settled with his tenants, which was reminiscent of the extra fare during slavery at this time of the year. About the same time the annual revival was held nightly in order to "save sinners and bring backsliders back into the fold." The dull routine of rural life was relieved by weddings and funerals with great pageantry. But the most momentous occasions were the gatherings within the secrecy of the lodges from which the uninitiated, including even the white man, was barred. Thus the routine of life passed within the world of the black folk.

Then came the World War. The inarticulate and resigned masses came to the city. It was a second emancipation. In some cases, after the train crossed the Ohio River, the migrants signalized the event by kissing the ground and holding prayer services. In their fatalistic acceptance of life, the



black peasants in the South had no more "race consciousness" than the Polish peasants in their village communities.<sup>1</sup> Their evaluation of themselves was what the white man had put upon them. "Mah, Gawd, Mr. S——, what do you want wid dat ugly black man up on yo' table," said the Negro woman to the white artist in Mississippi, who placed upon his desk the head of a jubilee singer, fashioned by the hands of a young Negro artist from the South, who had become the idol of a group of race-conscious Negroes in Chicago. But from the ranks of those very same women there came to Chicago women who began to think and feel to some extent as the woman from Mississippi who, according to her statement, had been tested for insanity in Chicago. She said:

You know I am a race woman and I ain't going to stand for any foolishness from any of these whites. Up here they asked me was I preaching in Mississippi, and I said no, I was fighting. I tells 'em about the drawing line they have and how our po' men just walking the streets, nothing to do, that Mayor Thompson is just fooling the colored people. They just don't understand me. But when I see something that ain't right I just have to do something—my blood stands in my head and I just boil. . . . Sometimes I reads the *Defender*, when I have a dime, you know. But that *Defender* don't put it out half as bad as it is. They might take some things but there is lots of things going on here that the *Defender* ought to take up. A white man will get on the car and call you a nigger. And the street cars will pass you right on by. They is just as nasty here as down South.<sup>2</sup>

Or take the eighteen-year-old girl from Arkansas whose sister had sent her to Chicago when she was fourteen because it was said to be a place where colored people had "a chance." When her sister died she was forced to support herself through her own efforts. "I want to be a teacher,"

<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Park and Herbert A. Miller, *Old World Traits Transplanted* (Society for Social Research, University of Chicago, 1925), p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> Manuscript document.

she said, "so I can do something and not have to work for these white people. You know the world is calling for knowledge. I want to study so I can get out from under the foot of these white people."

Not only did those who came from the South become race conscious, but many of the old inhabitants who had enjoyed many privileges in the North became conscious of their identity with the peasants from the South when race conflicts arose. There was the mulatto woman who was a member of an old family that boasted of being one of the first colored families in Chicago. In recalling her reactions to the influx of Negroes from the South and her subsequent assimilation in the Negro group, she said:

When the Negro started coming to Chicago, I didn't know what to do. We had always been able to go where we pleased without any thought of race and had our white friends who visited us and whom we visited. I would get on the street car, for instance, and see a big black man or big fat black woman come in the car and drop down beside a white person. I would run to see Mr. X (a leading colored man) and say to him "X, what are we going to do with all of these Negroes from the South coming in here? They look terrible. They sit down on the street car beside white people and I am sure that there is going to be trouble." He would always tell me that these were my people but I would always answer him that I didn't belong to any such people. Moreover, he would tell me to be sympathetic towards them—trying to show me that they had to make a living as any other people. I would shake my head in disgust and leave his office. I would talk with my sister over moving out somewhere in order to get rid of these people, but gradually we decided to stay among them and to receive those white friends who would continue to visit us and to let those go who did not want to come.

During the War I remembered how proud I was of the Negro soldiers as they marched up Michigan Avenue. I felt that they were representing me. I had often boasted of my Spanish ancestry but I soon found myself telling white people who would ask me what I was

that I was prouder of the Negro blood in me than all the rest. As the War progressed and I was called upon to assist in making life easier for the soldiers, among them I had a brother, I became affiliated more and more with Negro organizations. At the present time I am interested in Negro Art and helping to make it possible for the Negro to make his unique contribution to the world. I feel that the Negro has a peculiar endowment—a feeling for color—a sensitiveness to rhythm, which we, as a group, should make known to the world.<sup>1</sup>

Strange transformations take place in the personality of the Negroes in the city. For example, there was the little mulatto woman from Mississippi and her husband who for economic reasons lived as white on the North Side and had their social contacts in the colored world on the South Side. A fortuitous encounter brought this woman face to face with a black Negro from her state who had also lost his identity.

I was walking down Michigan Avenue when I ran into a man with an East Indian turban, black English walking coat and grey striped trousers. He was in company with a white woman who made a rather poor appearance. I immediately recognized him as a member of a Negro family who lived in an adjoining county to the one I lived in Mississippi. He had belonged to a family of Negroes whom we call "burr-headed" Negroes. Although his father was very dark and had kinky hair and his mother was of similar appearance, this boy was always very handsome with thick, black glossy curly hair. His family was in moderate circumstances. He had been educated at a college in Georgia. As both of us were standing waiting for the traffic, I touched his arm and said to him, "It seems to me that I have seen you before." He answered with an accent "Beeg pardon but Ladee you are mees-taken, I do not know you." The white woman with him became interested immediately. I asked him if he would excuse himself a moment. He did so and stepped aside to have a talk with me. I said to him, "William, what does this mean?" Immediately he dropped into his usual manner of talking and half whispered, "Give me your telephone number." I told him no, because I could not let any one as dark as he visit me on the North Side.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> Manuscript document.

Thus in their efforts to survive and find a place in the strange and anonymous world of a large city like Chicago the migrants from the South appear in unfamiliar and odd rôles.

To even the most optimistic social worker with the care of a hundred or more dependent and broken Negro families, the disorganization of Negro life in the city seems at times to be a disease, whose painful manifestations can only be alleviated until the disease reaches its fatal consummation. To judges and officers of the law, who think of Negroes in terms of the conventional stereotypes that form the basis of public opinion, and to the great white world that learns of happenings within the Negro world chiefly through newspaper reports of crime and vice, the disorganization of life within the Negro community is something to be kept in check in order that it will not overwhelm the rest of the city. But within the disorder and confusion in this world, there is a slow process of renewal of life. If, in the struggle to survive in a strange and hostile environment, many succumb to disease, poverty, and vice, there are others who prove that the travail of urban life is a forerunner of new birth. And as Dr. Burgess has clearly indicated concerning the dual aspect of this process:

Normally the processes of disorganization and organization may be thought of as in reciprocal relationship to each other, and as co-operating in a moving equilibrium of social order toward an end vaguely or definitely regarded as progressive. So far as disorganization points to reorganization and makes for more efficient adjustment, disorganization must be conceived not as pathological, but as normal.<sup>1</sup>

If the disorganization of Negro life, which one sees in the city, is only one aspect of the social metabolism of the Negro

<sup>1</sup> Ernest W. Burgess, "The Growth of the City" in *The City*, edited by Park and Burgess (Chicago, 1925), p. 54.



group, how shall one measure these processes of decay and renewal of life? The Negro population in the city is more than a mere numerical aggregate of individuals. It has a location in relation to other racial and cultural groups and as a part of the total organization of the city. More important still is the fact that within the more or less defined area occupied by the Negro population the distribution of individuals and institutions is in response to the social processes going on in the community.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, in order to get a measure of these processes of disorganization and reorganization, it is necessary to relate the statistics on the different aspects of Negro life to the Negro community, the chief characteristics of which we shall delineate and chart in chapter vi.

<sup>1</sup> According to Dr. Park "sociological research may very properly begin with the community" because it is a "visible object" and one can "define its territorial limits, and plot its constituent elements, its population, and its institutions on maps. Its characteristics are more susceptible to statistical treatment than society, in the sense of Comte" (see "Sociology" in *Research in the Social Sciences*, edited by Wilson Gee [New York, 1929], p. 9). Dr. Park has defined the community as follows: "Community, in the broadest sense of that term, has a spacial and a geographical connotation. Every community has a location, and the individuals who compose it have a place of residence within the territory which the community occupies. Otherwise they are transients and are not reckoned as members. They also have an occupation in the local economy. Towns, cities, hamlets, and, under modern conditions, the whole world, with all its differences of race, of culture, and of individual interests—all these are communities. They are all communities in just so far as, through the exchange of goods and services, they may be regarded as cooperating to carry on a common life" (*ibid.*, p. 7).



## CHAPTER VI

### THE NEGRO COMMUNITY IN CHICAGO

#### I. ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE NEGRO POPULATION

Traditionally the Negro community in Chicago goes back to Baptiste Point de Saible, a San Domingan Negro, who built, about 1779, a rude hut on the north bank of the Chicago River, where he was still living in 1794.<sup>1</sup> Since then, from time to time, the Negro has appeared in the chronicles of the early history of the city. A Negro woman and her child were among those who were massacred at Fort Dearborn in 1812.<sup>2</sup> In the thirties the town crier of auctions and lost children was a Negro.<sup>3</sup> While Negroes in other parts of the country were fleeing to Canada to escape the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, a convention of Negroes resolved "not to fly to Canada," but "to remain and defend themselves." Their stand was supported by a mass-meeting of citizens who condemned the law and defied its enforcement.<sup>4</sup> At that time, the Negro population numbered 323

<sup>1</sup> A. T. Andreas, *History of Chicago. From the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (3 vols.; Chicago, 1884), I, 70, 71. "'Baptiste Point de Saible, a handsome Negro, well educated and settled at Eschikagou; but much in the French interest.' This apparently unimportant fact, recorded July 4, 1779, by Colonel Arent Schuyler DePeyster, then British commander at Michilimakinac, is the initial point from which may be traced the growth of Chicago, from a single rude cabin on the sandpoint at the mouth of the river, to the magnificent city which stands today, the type of modern progressive civilization."

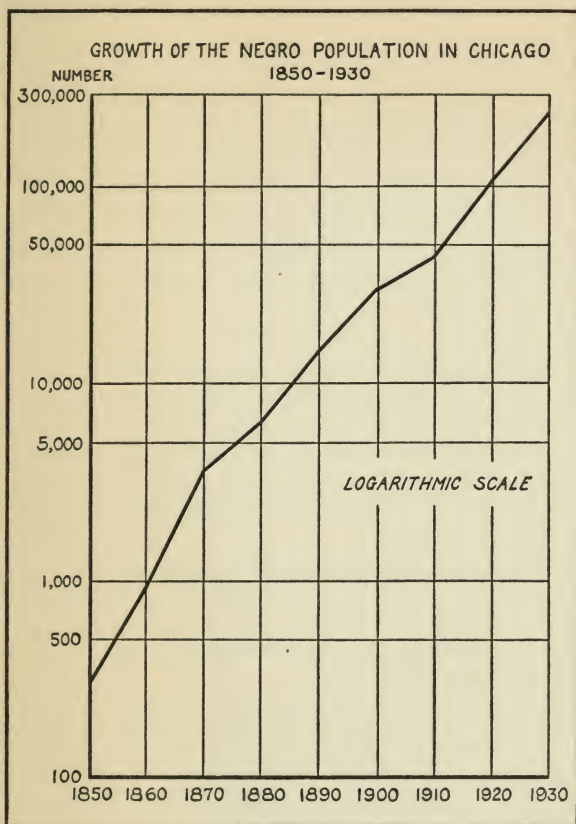
<sup>2</sup> Milo Milton Quaife, *Chicago and the Northwest, 1673-1835. A Study of the Evolution of the Northwestern Frontier, Together with a History of Fort Dearborn* (Chicago, 1913), pp. 227-28.

<sup>3</sup> Andreas, *op. cit.*, p. 605.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 608.

free colored persons, 29 of whom were attending school.<sup>1</sup> Although there is no historical connection between the tradi-

CHART III



tion of the first settler and the present Negro community, the force of this tradition is growing as the community consciousness increases.

<sup>1</sup> *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850*, p. 705.

The growth of the Negro population during the eighty years between 1850 and 1930 was considerable for each decade. Although during the ten years before the outbreak of the Civil War there were less than a thousand Negroes in Chicago, fifteen of them had acquired sufficient wealth to own property.<sup>1</sup> After the Civil War Chicago became the destination of many of the migrating Negroes, and the Negro population had quadrupled by the time of the great fire in 1871. The old settlers still cherish memories of the part that the Negro played in that catastrophe. The Negro community continued to grow, largely through migrations from the South, until it numbered over six thousand in 1880. At

TABLE VIII  
THE NEGRO POPULATION IN CHICAGO AT EACH  
DECENNIAL CENSUS, 1850-1930

Year	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930
Population	323	958	3,696	6,480	14,271	30,150	44,103	109,594	233,903

the end of the next ten years the population had doubled again and then another migration set in. A Negro physician who came to Chicago from the South about 1890 gives his impression as a newcomer:

The leading business among the colored people was railroading. The headwaiters were at the top of society. They almost dictated social customs. A man prided himself that he was Mr. So and So's valet. Next to the head-waiters were the porters and then came the barbers. I have seen that whole thing change. First there were four colored doctors. Very few colored people employed a colored physician, they didn't believe in it. There was great rivalry between the home people and the strangers. I was known as an interloper, also X

<sup>1</sup> Monroe Work, *Negro Real Estate Holders in Chicago* (Master's thesis; Chicago, 1903), pp. 7-11.

and some others. A man would pride himself on being able to tell you he got \$75 a month. At that time there were not over five colored teachers in the schools. There were only about four colored families that lived East of State Street. They would take great pride in putting in the papers about Mrs. So and So and others who lived East of State Street. The colored papers at that time were the *Conservator* and the *Appeal*. There were two clubs known as the Locust and another called the "400." You could not enter that club if you had not been here in Chicago and had not courted favors with certain people. Mr. X was at the door when they would give affairs and had a pencil in his hand and wanted to know who you were. If there was no one there to identify you they would just draw a line through your name. I remember when they gave a charity ball about 36 or 37 years ago, people pawned their coats to get enough money to attend. . . . In those days the pride of the colored people was to get enough money to go to the Palmer House and have a meal. . . . I was a student then and could not attend any of those affairs. In those days it was thought that a dark man and dark woman could not achieve anything in professional and social life. But of course late years, men like X, Dr. Y, and others—all brown skin men—have been so successful that they have broken down that. It was very hard for a dark woman if she didn't belong to a certain set. . . . In those days when you came to Chicago if you didn't know the W——, S——, and F——, was to declare yourself unknown. In those days they had no banks. They spent all their time striving to keep up with the rich people.<sup>1</sup>

There was a slowing down of the migrations of Negroes to Chicago during the first decade of the present century. The newcomers from the South began to acquire a foothold and to compete for status in the Negro community. The small increase in home ownership at that time probably reflected the success of this new element in the Negro population. The new aims and ambitions that became apparent among the Negroes seem to have been stimulated by the new leaders. A spectator and participant in the changing scene says:

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography of a Physician* (manuscript).



About 1905 there came a sort of renaissance. There was X going into real estate. There came into existence a small group of people that you might call the intelligentsia. In that group were R—, B—, W—. They organized a reading club, called the Prudence Crandall Club. From that began to spring business men—men in real estate and politicians, small stores and merchants. The first man elected to office was J— J—. Then T— J—, then E— W—. Out of this small group of intelligentsia began to spring colored people with a desire to own offices besides being porters and janitors. They began to struggle to elect aldermen. They elected X to the State Legislature. For thirty years they have had somebody down there. They were fifteen years trying to get an alderman. There was an awakening from this little group of people. They began to read and study and out of that group came men striving for higher things in life. There was a great fuss about these interlopers coming here. But as I see it, the home boys and girls outside of good times never stood out as leaders, or people who have accomplished anything.<sup>1</sup>

The steady waves of migrations had been incorporated into the Negro community with comparatively little friction and disorganization until the deluge of migrants came from the South during the World War. Migrations during the previous decades had come chiefly from the border states,<sup>2</sup> where Negroes represented, on the whole, a higher level of economic and cultural development and could more easily adapt themselves to a large urban environment. But when the thousands of plantation Negroes from the lower South during the War period caused the Negro population to increase suddenly nearly 150 per cent, the equilibrium that had been established between the white and black communities was destroyed, and there was great disorganization of life in the Negro community.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Louise Venable Kennedy, *The Negro Peasant Turns Cityward* (New York, 1930), pp. 29-30.



## 2. DISTRIBUTION OF THE NEGRO POPULATION

The expansion of the Negro community was not a unique phenomenon, but was similar to the movements of other racial and immigrant groups in the city of Chicago.<sup>1</sup> Like other racial and cultural groups of a low economic status, Negroes at first acquired a foothold in and near the center of the city where less resistance is offered to the invasion of alien elements.<sup>2</sup> Many of the older residents in the Negro community played as children in what is now the Loop. As the city expanded, the segregation of the Negro population was the result of the general process of segregation of cultural and racial groups, which is an aspect of urban growth. The Negro population was concentrated mainly in the area of deterioration surrounding the central business section.<sup>3</sup> In this area where rents were cheap because the decaying and deserted residences had not yet become a part of the

<sup>1</sup> Ernest W. Burgess, "Residential Segregation in American Cities" in *The Annals*, CXL (November, 1928), 110. "The movement of Negro population into new residential areas is often considered as different in kind from that of other racial, immigrant, or economic groups. When studied, however, from the standpoint of human ecology, it appears to vary little, if at all, from those of other groups."

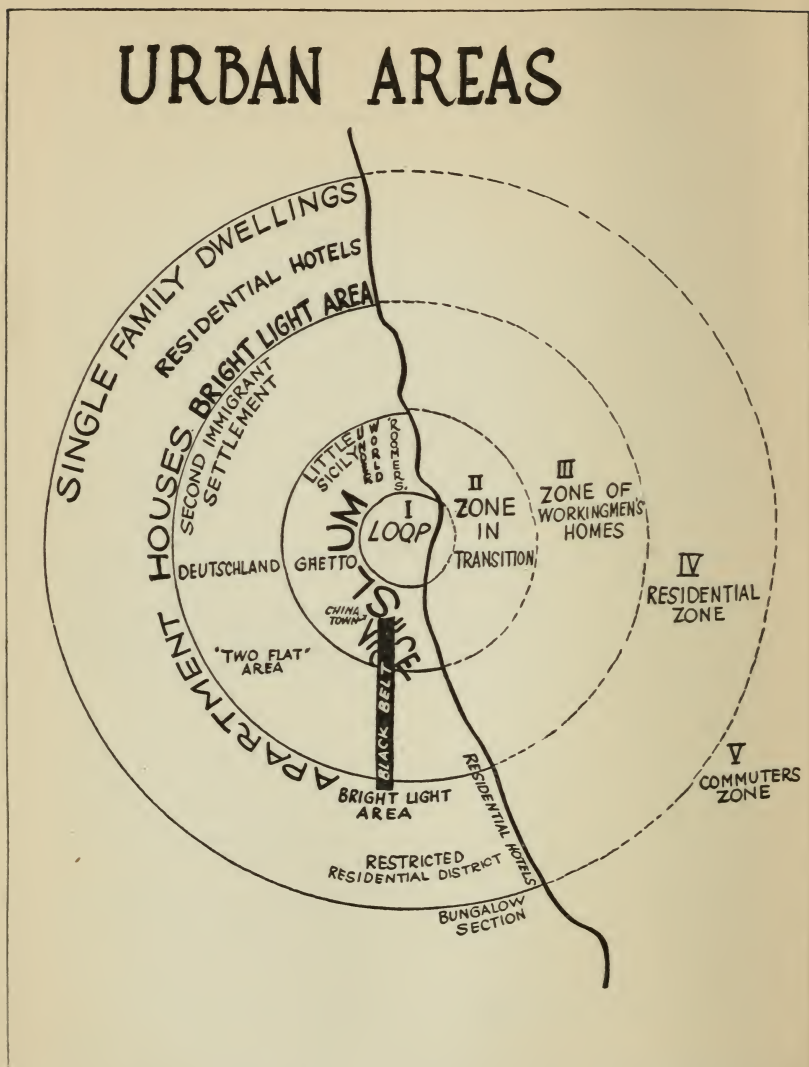
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Burgess has described the process of urban expansion as follows: "The typical processes of the expansion of the city can best be illustrated, perhaps, by a series of concentric circles, which may be numbered to designate both the successive zones of urban extension and the types of areas differentiated in the process of expansion.

"This chart (p. 92) represents an ideal construction of the tendencies of any town or city to expand radially from its central business district—on the map 'The Loop' (I). Encircling the downtown area there is normally an area in transition, which is being invaded by business and light manufacture (II). A third area (III) is inhabited by the workers in industries who have escaped from the area of deterioration (II) but who desire to live within easy access of their work. Beyond this zone is the "residential area" (IV) of high-

CHART IV

## URBAN AREAS



Taken from *The City*, by R. E. Park et al., p. 55.

expanding business area, the Negro was able to establish himself. From this area the Negro population expanded westward along Lake Street and southward along State Street.

The advance of the Negro population along Lake Street in recent years has overwhelmed a settlement of Negroes which began many years ago through the pioneer efforts of the more industrious members of the Negro community. In the part of this area, bounded by Washington and Kinzie, Ashland and California avenues, where Negroes first settled, there were over six thousand in 1920.

On the near North Side where the area is deteriorating before the approach of industry the Negro is pushing out the Sicilian.

Into the heart of Little Hell has come, since the war, a fourth invasion which has gradually darkened its streets: the Negro from the rural

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class apartment buildings or of exclusive "restricted" districts of single family dwellings. Still farther, out beyond the city limits, is the commuters' zone—suburban areas, or satellite cities—within a thirty- to sixty-minute ride of the central business district (p. 50).

"In the expansion of the city a process of distribution takes place which sifts and sorts and relocates individuals and groups by residence and occupation. The resulting differentiation of the cosmopolitan American City into areas is typically all from one pattern, with only interesting minor modifications. Within the central business district or on an adjoining street is the 'main stem' of 'hobohemia,' the teeming Rialto of the homeless migratory man of the Middle West. In the zone of deterioration encircling the central business section are always to be found the so-called 'slums' and 'bad lands,' with their submerged regions of poverty, degradation, and disease, and their underworlds of crime and vice. Within a deteriorating area are rooming-house districts, the purgatory of 'lost souls.' Near by is the Latin Quarter, where creative and rebellious spirits resort. The slums are also crowded to overflowing with immigrant colonies—the Ghetto, Little Sicily, Greektown, Chinatown—fascinatingly combining old world heritages and American adaptations. Wedging out from here is the Black Belt, with its free and disorderly life" (pp. 54-56). Ernest W. Burgess, "The Growth of the City" in *The City*, edited by Robert E. Park and others (Chicago, 1925), chap. ii.

South. "Shore-croppers" and cotton pickers from rural Georgia, Mississippi, and Arkansas, ignorant and poverty stricken, they have succumbed to the lure of high wages that have prevailed in northern industrial cities since the shutting off of the stream of immigrants from southwestern Europe. Settling first in small numbers along Wells and Franklin streets, as the immigration grew they pushed westward into the tenements of Little Sicily until today on many of the streets of Little Sicily one hears the soft voice and sees the black face of the Negro as frequently as he hears the staccato speech and sees the brown skin of the southern Italian.

. . . . Willing to live in dwellings that even the Sicilian had abandoned, willing to pay higher rents than the Sicilian had paid, meeting these rents by overcrowding, the Negro has slowly but steadily pushed his way in among the Sicilians, who, in turn, have begun to move northward toward North Avenue, into the German slum.<sup>1</sup>

A similar invasion of the Ghetto near Hull-House is taking place at the present time.

Other settlements of Negroes were located in the southern part of the city. The Woodlawn community south of Washington Park was the location of several hundred upper-class Negro families, nearly a third of whom have bought homes. At the southern edge of the city, in Morgan Park, a Negro community had grown out of what was originally a settlement of servants who were employed in the homes of the professors in a nearby theological seminary. Since the migrations this community has increased to some extent as

<sup>1</sup> Harvey W. Zorbaugh, *The Gold Coast and the Slum* (Chicago, 1929), p. 147. Dr. Burgess has observed: "It is rather significant to point out in passing the frequent propinquity of Negroes and Italian settlements in our larger cities. The proximity of Negro and Italian communities in New York and Chicago is well known. Three of the other four cities, namely, Cleveland, Detroit, and Pittsburgh, analyzed above for concentration of population groups, contained a ward with over 10 per cent of the total Italian and Negro population of the city" (Ernest W. Burgess, *Residential Segregation in American Cities*, p. 112).



Negroes have sought to escape from the Black Belt and find a place where they could buy homes.<sup>1</sup>

The majority of the Negro population has moved southward. In 1920, 90 per cent of the Negro population was concentrated in the South Side Black Belt or the area bounded by Twelfth and Thirty-ninth streets, Wentworth Avenue, and Lake Michigan.<sup>2</sup> Into this area the great influx of migrants from the South poured during the World War, and caused the Negro population to overflow into the surrounding area. For some years, as the growth of the city had caused business and light manufacture to encroach more and more on the surrounding area of deterioration, Negroes had been steadily driven out of the Black Belt in search of homes.<sup>3</sup> The Negro population had tended to move into those areas occupied by whites which were also undergoing a change of character.<sup>4</sup> The Negro invasion of the white areas had proceeded quietly and without friction, until the shortage of homes for the whites, created by the suspension

<sup>1</sup> *The Negro in Chicago*, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108-9.

<sup>3</sup> The expansion of the Negro population has not been only into areas adjacent to the Black Belt. Some indication of the extent to which Negroes are scattered over Chicago is afforded by the fact that in 314 of 499 census tracts, which were used as units for the federal enumeration of 1920, there were one or more families, and in 138 of these tracts Negroes owned their homes.

<sup>4</sup> *The Negro in Chicago*, p. 117. "Conditions in Hyde Park during 1916 and 1917 favored the overflow. Numbers of new, and in some instances high-grade, apartment houses had been built during the previous ten or fifteen years. Many whites were leaving their individual houses to live in these apartments or to move to the North and South Shore regions. The houses had become less desirable, and many of them were vacant. The district, except for certain definite neighborhoods, had lost much of its former aristocratic air, with the coming of rooming- and boarding-houses. During 1914, 1915, and 1916 many houses and apartments in Hyde Park were vacant or were rented at low prices. Inducements were offered to prospective tenants in the form of extensive decorations and repairs, or some rental allowance."



# MAP I

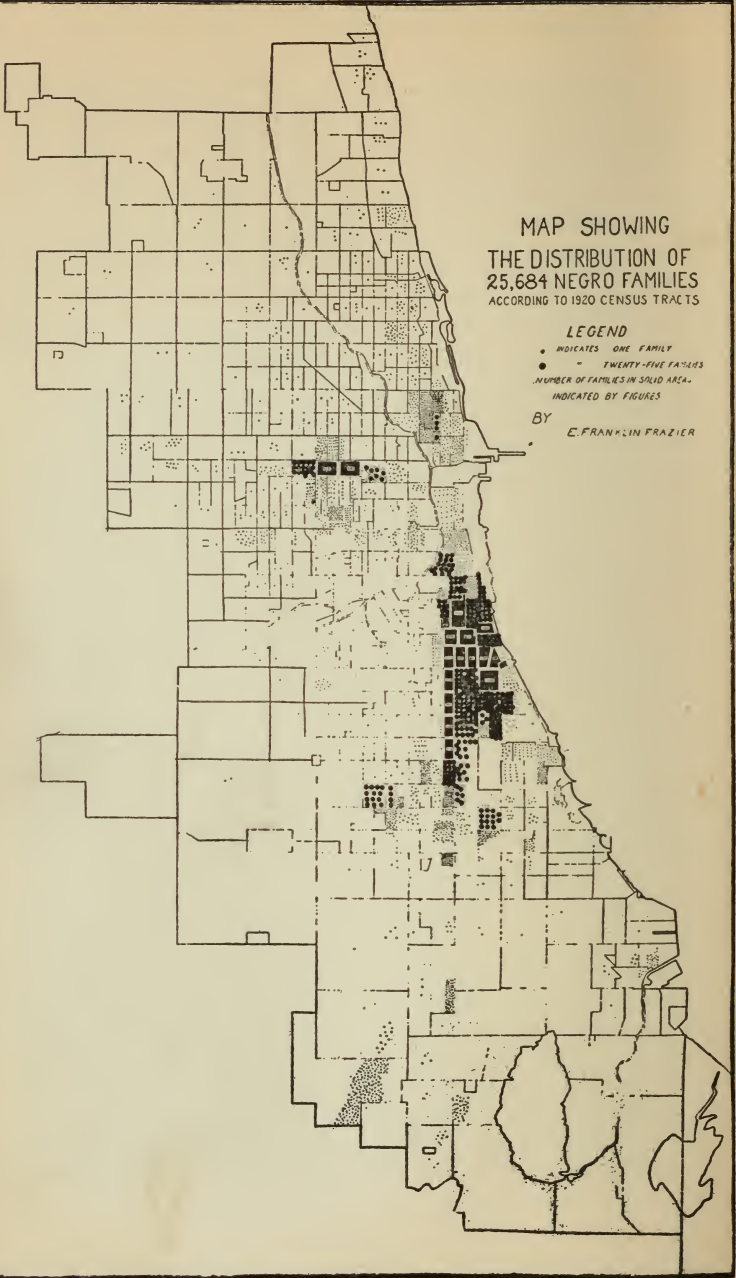
## MAP SHOWING THE DISTRIBUTION OF 25,684 NEGRO FAMILIES ACCORDING TO 1920 CENSUS TRACTS

### LEGEND

- INDICATES ONE FAMILY
- INDICATES TWENTY-FIVE FAMILIES
- NUMBER OF FAMILIES IN SOLID AREA  
INDICATED BY FIGURES

BY

E. FRANKLIN FRAZIER



of building operations during the War, brought a halt to the movement of the whites from these changing areas. It was then that the conflict between the rapidly expanding Negro population and the resisting whites led to the organization of property owners' associations and in some cases to bombing and other forms of violence.<sup>1</sup> But neither violence nor property owners' associations have been able to prevent the expansion of the Negro community, which has been bound up, on the whole, with the processes of urban growth.

### 3. THE SEVEN ZONES IN THE SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY

Within the Negro community there are processes of selection which bring about segregation on the basis of occupations, intelligence, and ambition.<sup>2</sup> The result of these processes of selection in the case of immigrant colonies and ghettos is that "the keener, the more energetic and more ambitious move into the area of the second immigrant settlement or into a cosmopolitan area in which the members of several immigrant and racial groups meet and live side by side."<sup>3</sup> But as these processes take place in the Negro community, there is greater resistance offered to the movement of the Negro chiefly because of his color.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the majority of the population in 1920 was spread over a large continuous area on the South Side. The expansion, which has taken place since the World War, has continued to follow along the State Street arterial highway southward and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122-33.

<sup>2</sup> Robert E. Park, "The Urban Community as a Spacial Pattern and a Moral Order" in *The Urban Community*, edited by Ernest W. Burgess (Chicago, 1926), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> E. W. Burgess, *Residential Segregation in American Cities*, p. 112.

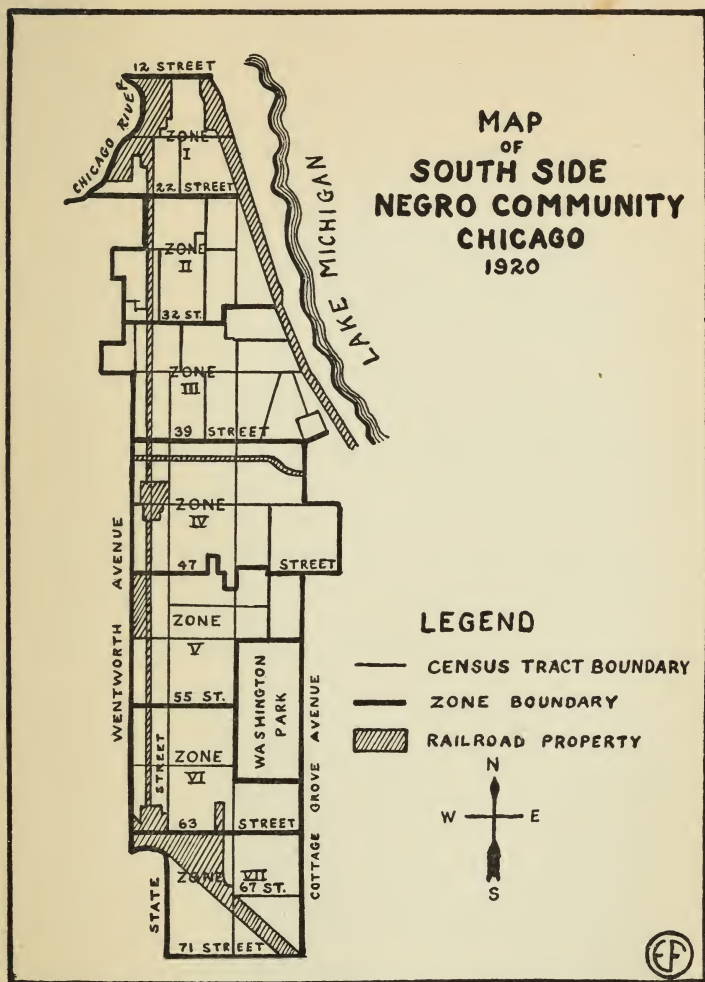
to spread eastward until the Black Belt area at present is almost continuous with the Woodlawn area.

As the Negro community has expanded southward, through the process of selection, different elements in the Negro population have tended to become segregated in different zones<sup>1</sup> within the community. Although nearly four-fifths of all the Negroes in Chicago were born in the South, the proportion of southern-born inhabitants in the population diminishes as one leaves those sections of the Negro community nearest the heart of the city. It is in those zones just outside of the Loop where decaying residences and tottering frame dwellings presage the inroads of industry

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Burgess has shown that the process of urban expansion can be measured by the rates of change in poverty, home ownership, and other variable conditions for unit areas along the main thoroughfares radiating from the center of the city. (Ernest W. Burgess, "The Determination of Gradients in the Growth of the City," *Publication of the American Sociological Society*, XXVI [1927], 178-84.)

A similar method has been used to measure the differences in the character of the Negro population in the South Side community. Statistics on the Negro population were secured from data given for the census tracts, which were used as units for the federal enumeration of 1920. These census tracts in the South Side area have been grouped so as to create seven zones, each approximately a mile in length. Because of the variations in the size of these census tracts, it has not been possible to make the zones of equal length. The first and second zones each extend for a distance of ten blocks or a mile and a quarter, from Roosevelt Road, or Twelfth Street, to Twenty-second Street, and from Twenty-second Street to Thirty-second Street. The third zone extends from Thirty-second Street to Thirty-ninth Street, or a distance of seven-eighths of a mile. Each of the next four zones is eight blocks, or a mile in length. They are bounded by Forty-seventh, Fifty-fifth, Sixty-third, and Seventy-first streets. In the case of the seventh zone, it has not been possible to compute rates for the entire area from Sixty-third Street to Seventy-first Street for all the indexes of community organization. The rates for some of these indexes are restricted to one census tract in Woodlawn, bounded by Cottage Grove and South Parkway avenues on the East and West, and Sixty-seventh and Sixty-third streets on the South and North. See Map II.

MAP II





and business that the southern migrant is able to pay the cheap rents that landlords are willing to accept until their property is demanded by the expanding business area. In these areas of deterioration the poorer migrant families are often forced into association with the vicious elements of the city. "We came from the South to Chicago in April 1913 and having no relatives here, we naturally drifted

TABLE IX

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEGRO POPULATION IN SEVEN ZONES OF THE  
SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 1920

	RATE PER HUNDRED OF THE POPULATION						
	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III	Zone IV	Zone V	Zone VI	Zone VII
Heads of families: southern born.....	77.7	77.0	74.7	73.8	72.6	69.0	65.2*
Mulattoes: fifteen years and over							
Male.....	19.9	19.0	33.5	19.2	22.8	31.3	49.7*
Female.....	27.2	23.8	40.2	24.0	24.7	32.8	48.5*
Persons illiterate: ten years and over.....	13.4	4.6	3.2	2.3	3.3	2.9	2.7

\* For one census tract only, including the area between Sixty-third and Sixty-seventh streets.

down to Twenty-third and Wabash," said a stenographer, whose family has moved southward with the expanding community and now lives in the fourth zone. She continued:

At that time we were living in the Red Light District. In this block at Twenty-third and Wabash were mixtures of white and colored people. The white people were all prostitutes. They ran buffet flats and beer flats. But it was not so among the colored people. They were decent people and attended Quinn Chapel. There was a house next door to us operated by a white woman named Sophie. She had a house full of white girls and you could see the men coming in and out all day and night. They would come up the alley and in the back gate. In the



day the girls would sit around in the yard half clad. They would wash their hair and sit out there to dry it. The big gate was kept locked during the day. The policemen would come up and ring the little bell and Sophie would come out and unlock the gate. They were just protecting the house, I suppose, and would go in to get a drink or get tipped off. At night the gate was not locked and men would come and go. At any time during the night people would knock at our gate thinking it was the place. There was a number of such houses in the neighborhood. We were never permitted to sit out back because there were so many obscene sights. There was a flat just below us and when we went on our back porch we could see girls coming up to the windows nude and when it was warm they would prop their feet up in the windows and smoke cigarettes. We never got into any trouble with these people. We wouldn't speak to them and they didn't speak to us.<sup>1</sup>

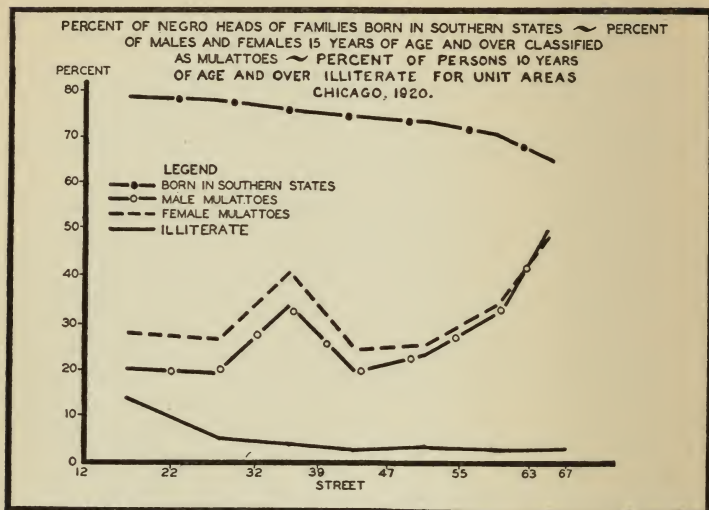
As the migrant families have gradually become established in the city, they or their children have moved out of the areas included in the first and second zones (see Table IX) into the better neighborhoods. This southward movement of the Negro population has also been in response to the ever expanding central business area. As these southern migrants, whose illiteracy in 1920 was the same as the Negroes in Houston and Dallas, Texas, and over three times as high as that of the entire Negro population in Chicago, have pressed on the families in the better areas, the latter have moved into the zones further south. In the seventh zone, at the southern end of the Negro community, were concentrated those families who had succeeded in the struggle of city life. Although less than two-thirds of the heads of families in this area were born in the South, the parents of many of the native-born Negroes had come from the South during earlier migrations.

The progressive decrease in the proportion of southern-

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

born Negroes in these seven zones was paralleled by an increase in the proportion of mulattoes in the population.<sup>1</sup> The so-called Black Belt on the South Side did not exhibit the same degree of blackness in all sections. In the first and second zones near the Loop, where the plantation Negro

CHART V



from the South first settled, only one out of five Negro men and one out of four women one met in 1920 showed some

<sup>1</sup> "Considerable uncertainty necessarily attaches to the classification of Negroes as black and mulatto, since the accuracy of the distinction made depends largely upon the judgment and care employed by the enumerators. Moreover, the fact that the definition of the term "mulatto" adopted at different censuses has not been entirely uniform doubtless affects the comparability of the figures in some degree. At the census of 1920 the instructions were to report as "black" all full-blooded Negroes and as "mulatto" all Negroes having some proportion of white blood" (*Fourteenth Census of the United States*, Vol. II, *Population*, p. 16).

admixture of white blood.<sup>1</sup> But in the third zone one out of three Negro men and two out of five women were likely to show mixed ancestry. The concentration of mulattoes in this zone as contrasted with the adjacent areas north and south was part of the process of selection in the Negro community. Through the heart of this zone ran Thirty-fifth Street, the bright-light area of the Negro community. Here were found the "black and tan" cabarets, pleasure gardens, gambling places, night clubs, hotels, and houses of prostitution. It was the headquarters of the famous "policy king"; the rendezvous of the "pretty" brown-skinned boys, many of whom were former bell hops,<sup>2</sup> who "worked" white and colored girls in hotels and on the streets; here the mulatto queen of the underworld ran the biggest poker game on the South Side; here the "gambler de luxe" ruled until he was killed by a brow-beaten waiter. In this world the mulatto girl from the South who, ever since she heard that she was "pretty enough to be an actress," had visions of the stage, realized her dream in one of the cheap theaters. To this same congenial environment the mulatto boy from Oklahoma, who danced in the rôle of the son of an Indian woman, had found his way. To this area were attracted the Bohemian, the disorganized, and the vicious elements in the Negro world.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For each decennial census beginning with 1850, there has been a larger proportion of mulattoes in the Negro population in the North than in the South. Coincident with the migrations to Chicago of large numbers of plantation Negroes during the war period, the percentage of mulattoes in the Negro population declined from 41.6 in 1910 to 27.4 in 1920.

<sup>2</sup> Some white hotels will employ mulattoes only as bellmen.

<sup>3</sup> It has been pointed out that the mulatto because of his emancipation from the traditional and customary status and outlook on life of the pure-blooded Negro, through greater participation in the white world, exhibits the

The segregation of mulattoes in even greater proportions in the sixth and seventh zones, where there were fewer southern-born Negroes and less than 3 per cent illiterate, was an aspect of the general tendency of the higher social and occupational classes to move out from the mass of the Negro population.<sup>1</sup> This had been the case since the beginning of the Negro community in Chicago. The small group of Negroes, mostly mulattoes, who represented the vanguard of the race in thrift and attempts to acquire some degree of culture, had continually attempted to escape from the less energetic and the lower elements in the Negro population. "My father did not care to live with the colored people for he could not see how he could make any progress among them," said an old settler, whose father, once a trusted mulatto slave in Kentucky, had bought his family and come to Chicago just before the Civil War. He with his family moved out on the West Side and bought a home on Lake Street. The same was true at a later date of the small group of Negro families who first bought homes and settled in the Woodlawn area or the seventh zone in the South Side Negro community. Among this group were three Pullman porters, a government employee, and a police lieutenant. This community continued to grow during the present century, and in 1920 the large proportion of mulattoes—50 per cent—in

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characteristics of the "marginal man" or cultural hybrid—"spiritual instability, intensified self-consciousness, restlessness and malaise" ("Migration and the Marginal Man," by Robert E. Park, in *Personality and the Social Group*, edited by Ernest W. Burgess [Chicago, 1929]).

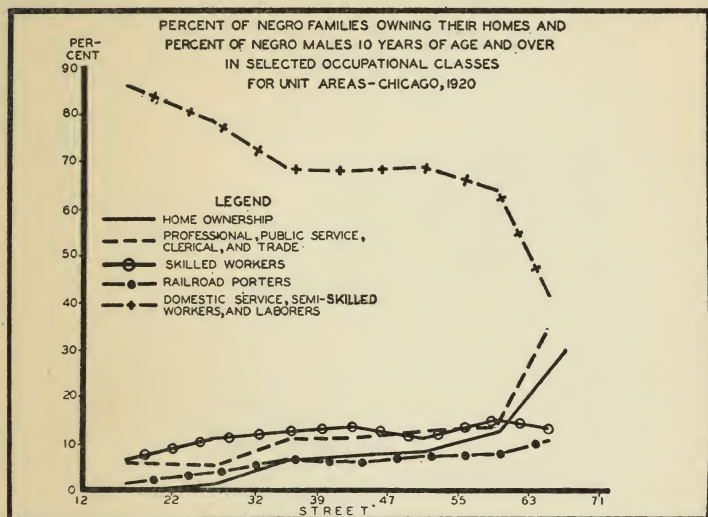
<sup>1</sup> Students of the Negro have frequently called attention to the fact that a large proportion of Negro leaders, professional men and women, and exceptional individuals, were of mixed blood. The most comprehensive study of the materials bearing on this aspect of Negro life has been analyzed in a volume, *The Mulatto in the United States*, by Edward B. Reuter (Boston, 1918).



the Negro population coincided with the concentration of the upper occupational classes in this area.

The spatial pattern, which the seven zones in the South Side Negro community presented, was a reflection of the occupational and cultural organization of the community.<sup>1</sup>

CHART VI



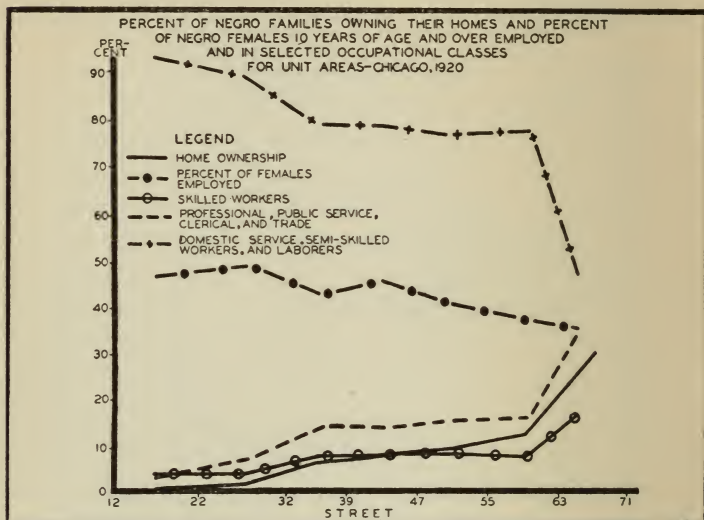
Originally, the small group of Negroes who, because of superior culture, emerged from the mass of the population and constituted the upper class did not represent primarily the occupational differentiation of the population. The development of industrial and professional classes in Chicago as in other cities has been accelerated by the migrations. The migrations to southern cities had in previous decades

<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Park, "The Urban Community as a Spacial Pattern and a Moral Order" in *The Urban Community*, edited by Ernest W. Burgess (Chicago, 1926), p. 9.



brought about some differentiation of the population on the basis of occupation; but the migrations to northern cities during the war period offered the Negro unprecedented opportunities to gain a foothold in the industrial organization of these cities.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in the large Negro communities

CHART VII



in the northern cities, the occupational differentiation of the population has been due partly to competition to serve the newly created wants and varied needs of an awakened people.

<sup>1</sup> In Pittsburgh, for example, the number of Negroes in steel plants increased from less than 100 in five plants in 1910 to 16,900 in 23 plants in 1923 (Charles S. Johnson, "The Changing Economic Status of the Negro," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, CXL, 131). See also E. Franklin Frazier, "Occupational Classes among Negroes in Cities," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXXV, 718-27, for differences in the occupational status of Negroes in northern and southern cities.

TABLE X

THE DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL CLASSES AND THE PERCENTAGE  
OF WOMEN EMPLOYED IN THE SEVEN ZONES OF THE SOUTH SIDE  
NEGRO COMMUNITY IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 1920\*

	RATE PER HUNDRED EMPLOYED POPULATION, TEN YEARS OF AGE AND OVER						
	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III	Zone IV	Zone V	Zone VI	Zone VII
Professional and public service, trade, and clerical:							
Male.....	5.8	5.5	10.7	11.2	12.5	13.4	34.2
Female.....	3.0	6.5	13.3	13.3	14.8	15.2	33.3
Skilled:							
Male.....	6.2	10.8	12.3	13.6	11.1	14.4	13.0
Female.....	3.9	3.9	7.5	7.7	7.8	7.4	16.6
Railroad porters†.....	1.4	3.9	6.7	6.5	7.5	7.7	10.7
Semi-skilled, domestic service, and laborers:							
Male.....	86.1	78.8	68.9	67.9	68.6	63.6	41.6
Female.....	92.9	88.3	78.4	78.1	76.1	76.8	46.9
Percentage of women employed	46.1	48.1	42.3	45.2	39.7	36.6	34.5

\* The Negro wage-earners as given in the United States census for 1920 have been distributed according to eight occupational classes, which have been created from occupations significantly related. Therefore, it has been necessary to ignore, on the whole, the major occupational divisions given in the census. The eight occupational classes which have been used in our analysis are constituted as follows:

*Professional service.*—The professional-service group in our classification remains just as it is given in the census, except for showmen and healers.

*Public service.*—This class has been created out of the occupations given in the census with some additions and omissions. Laborers found under this group have been placed in a separate class while those listed under "All other occupations" have been placed under "Semi-skilled workers." Mail-carriers and railway mail clerks, who are placed under "Transportation" in the census, are also included. There may be some question as to the consistency of including watchmen and guards in this group, but since many Negroes in this group represent a higher economic class, with a keen sense of their superior status in the Negro group, they have been retained in this class.

*Trade.*—This class includes bourgeois, petit bourgeois, and all those included in the different census classifications except clerical, who are generally designated the "white collar" class. Farmers and stock-raisers who are entrepreneurs are also included in this group.

*Clerical.*—This class is the same as the census classification except that messenger, bundle, and office boys and girls are placed in the semi-skilled class.

*Skilled workers.*—This group is made up of all occupations under manufacturing and mechanical pursuits except apprentices, laborers, managers and superintendents, manufacturers, and officials. Apprentices are placed under "Semi-skilled workers," while laborers are under the

[Footnote \* continued on following page]

† Presumably Pullman porters.

The occupational organization of the Negro community conforms to the distribution of Pullman porters, who at one time represented, on the whole, the group that had a comparably good income and a high conception of their place in the community. "Once in Chicago," said a former porter, "you weren't anybody unless you were a Pullman porter. We handled more money than most of the colored people, and led all the social life." The confirmation of this statement by a representative of the professional group, who said, "The Negro has gone a long way from the time when the Pullman porters were their leading men in Chicago," indicated at the same time the rise of higher occupational classes of considerable size and influence in the Negro community. There had always existed a few professional and business men scattered in the city, but the migrations during the war had, as one physician put it, "helped colored lawyers, doctors, and every colored person in Chicago." He continued:

They have been our best patrons. Of course, a lot of them were not properly adjusted because they had been used to rural life. I do not believe that this office building would have been here today if it had

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special classification. Managers, superintendents, manufacturers, and officials are included under "Trade." Those under "All other occupations" are placed with the semi-skilled. Baggage men, freight agents, brakemen, chauffeurs, conductors, foremen, overseers, inspectors, locomotive engineers and firemen, switchmen, flagmen, telephone and telegraph linemen and operators are taken from "Transportation" and placed in this division.

*Semi-skilled.*—This class is made up of semi-skilled workers given in the census under manufacturing and mechanical pursuits. "All other occupations," found under various classifications in the census, are also included. Draymen, teamsters, expressmen, sailors and deck hands, messengers, bundle and office boys, and deliverymen are included in this class.

*Domestic and personal service.*—This classification is the same as that given in the census except that railroad porters, who are presumably Pullman porters in the case of Chicago, have been made a separate class.

*Laborers.*—This class is made up of laborers drawn from wherever they are found in the census classification. Stevedores and longshoremen as well as "All other occupations" under the extraction of minerals are also placed in this group.

Wherever those engaged in the extraction of minerals and agriculture have not been classified, they have been left unclassified in our scheme. Mine operatives have been placed with the semi-skilled, while those in "All other occupations" have been placed with the laborers.

not been for those Negroes who came from the South. In less than thirty-eight years we have increased from five to two hundred and fifty doctors. We are living in better homes, and have more teachers in the schools; and nearly every colored church has benefitted.

The professional and commercial classes which have superseded the Pullman porters as leaders have tended to be segregated in the same areas as the latter. Little more than 1 per cent of the employed men in the zone near the Loop, where four-fifths of the residents were born in the South, were employed as railroad porters. On the other hand, about nine-tenths of the men and women in this area were employed in domestic service and as unskilled laborers. The next area showed about the same characteristics except that the percentage of skilled male workers almost doubled. The small professional and clerical group in these zones were in some cases unmarried persons who lived in the same building in which they had offices, and small groups of upper-class families who, owning their homes, attempted to resist the surrounding decay. The character of these areas was also indicated by the fact that nearly 50 per cent of the women were employed.

In the third zone, or bright-light area, there was a marked decrease in the proportion of persons engaged in the lower occupations and a corresponding increase in professional and other higher occupational classes. Here, too, were found isolated neighborhoods of property owners—mostly professional and business men—who had succeeded in keeping their neighborhoods free from the influx of disorderly families. The conspicuous decrease in the proportion of women gainfully employed in this zone probably reflected the general character of this area.

The two succeeding zones in the Negro community did



not present, on the whole, a very marked contrast to the third zone in regard to the concentration of large numbers of upper classes in these areas. On the western border of these zones, as throughout the Negro community, the poorer migrant families were advancing along the railroad lines entering the city. In the eastern part of these zones, better-class families, who had sought to escape the oncoming deluge of poor, ignorant, and disorganized Negroes in the areas farther north, were soon overwhelmed by the same people from whom they had escaped. A nurse whose family had moved into this area said:

When we bought this place here, all our neighbors were white except two colored families who had owned their property for thirty-three years, and three other colored families who had owned their homes for a shorter period. Soon after we moved in, the neighborhood began to change rapidly. A poor group of migrant families with large numbers of children moved in. Some of the colored property owners moved out. A white man bought one of their homes and rented it indiscriminately to colored people. A colored man who owned the building on the corner had sought only good colored tenants, but the white speculator who bought his house paid no attention to the class of colored people who rented the house.

The increase in the proportion of upper-class Negroes in the sixth zone, with a much smaller group of women employed, marked the southward progress of these classes. A professional man who, with a physician, a lawyer, and a musician, was one of the first colored families to move into a select neighborhood in the third zone and had been forced to move farther South said:

The neighborhood rapidly degenerated. Negroes passing by at all times of the night on their way to State, Dearborn, and Federal where they lived, used the vilest language and engaged in fights. The neighborhood became so bad that I was forced to move. At any time during the night you would hear a shot and the worst kind of cursing. My



# MAP III



## RESIDENCES OF 110 UPPER-CLASS NEGROES; WOODLAWN COMMUNITY

Physicians, dentists, lawyers, artists, school teachers, entrepreneurs, business executives, social workers.

wife had a young baby and could not stand the nervous strain. We moved out to 51st and Michigan Avenue. It was beautiful out there, the lawn well kept and everything inviting. But the same thing is happening out there. The same class of Negroes who ran us away from 37th Street are moving out there. They creep along slowly like a disease.<sup>1</sup>

The same story was told by the small group of upper-class Negroes segregated for a long while in the seventh zone in the Woodlawn area. Here, in 1920, where only 34.5 per cent of the women were employed, a third of the men and women were engaged in professional and public service and commercial pursuits. In this area on the periphery of the expanding Negro community was found the greatest concentration of the upper classes. The statement of a real estate dealer who moved into this area twenty-one years ago was substantially the same as that of a prospective resident, a professional woman, who was contemplating moving into this area after having moved repeatedly from the third, fourth, and fifth zones to escape undesirable neighbors. This old resident said:

I moved out here because it was sparsely settled at that time, and on account of my family I thought it best to be out where it was not so congested and the air more pure. We formerly lived in the 54th block on Dearborn—most of the better class Negroes living in that vicinity—but our immediate neighbors were very undesirable, causing disturbances all hours of night. It became so annoying that I was more determined than ever to move further out South.<sup>2</sup>

The division of labor represented in the occupational organization of the Negro community shaped the social organization of the community. The social organization was embodied in those institutions which developed in response to the efforts of different classes with common interests to

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> Manuscript document.

carry on group life and maintain control. These organizations might be divided in six types of related activities.

1. There were, first, the economic organizations which embraced the business enterprises and labor organizations. The business enterprises consisted of such larger establishments as insurance companies, banks, newspapers, and manufacturing, besides many smaller businesses. The labor organizations included two Pullman porters' associations, the plasterers' unions, the waiters' union, the musicians' union, and the red caps' union, etc. Although some of these unions were affiliated with white labor organizations, they represented mainly the efforts of those with common interests and common problems to maintain control.

2. There were three classes of religious organizations: (a) the denominational churches; (b) the independent and more liberal churches; (c) the "store-front" churches. Each type of church has grown up in response to the different conceptions of life held by the different strata of the Negro population. The older denominational churches, especially the Methodist and Baptist, hold about the same dominant place in the social life of masses of Negroes as they do in the South. "They serve as a medium for the exchange of ideas, making and maintaining friendships, community cooperation, collective striving, group competition, as well as for the dissemination of information, assistance and advice on practical problems, and the upholding of religious ideals."<sup>1</sup> For the more intelligent and emancipated portion of the Negro population these churches were not congenial. These people were generally found in the Congregational, Catholic, Lutheran, and Episcopal churches, and the independent churches. The denominational churches do not always offer

<sup>1</sup> *The Negro in Chicago*, pp. 142-43.

to the migrant the satisfactions which he found in the church in the South. The "store-front" church comes into existence as a result of an effort to maintain the face-to-face relationships of the South.

3. The professional organizations for physicians, dentists, pharmacists, and lawyers bring together Negro professional men in their respective associations, where they maintain group standards and promote their mutual welfare. These associations, including the social workers, are developed partly from necessity and partly from choice; for even where membership is open in the white organizations, the more intimate relations in the Negro community among those with common traditions and the same problems make such exclusive associations desirable.

4. There were certain social and civic organizations like the Chicago Urban League, Young Men's Christian Association, Young Women's Christian Association, and various agencies that represented the institutionalized social service in the community. On the other hand, the Chicago branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was the organized effort of the most intelligent and race-conscious group to achieve and maintain civil and political equality in the city.

5. The social and fraternal organizations consisted of lodges and clubs. Some of the lodges such as the Elks, Masons, and Odd Fellows have been taken over from the white social pattern, but there were other fraternal organizations with rituals which had grown up in the secondary relations of the Negro community. The most conspicuous and best organized of the latter type was the Moorish Science Temple, which came into public notice because of internal conflicts that resulted in a murder. The basis of



cohesion in this group was the integration of religious motives of the half-literate Negroes with certain nationalistic ideals. The social clubs included a rather large variety of groups with diverse aims. The Federation of Women's Clubs, whose primary aim was welfare work, comprised chiefly those groups outside of the professional, business, and clerical classes that had developed some group consciousness. There were also state clubs in which former residents of southern states, especially, attempted to maintain a certain solidarity because of their common origin. The group solidarity of these clubs has been utilized for political purposes. There were college clubs composed of the alumni of southern Negro colleges, and in the Greek letter fraternities and sororities there were brought together the most intellectual members of the community. The Intercollegiate Club has come into existence in response to the needs of the Negro students in the universities in the Chicago area for a type of intimate association that they do not enjoy in these schools. Two other clubs for purely social intercourse, which had maintained their integrity for nearly two decades, comprised the so-called social élite.

6. Organizations among Negroes for political purposes were maintained in two wards under the leadership of Negro committeemen. While these organizations form a part of the regular city Republican organization, they represent to a small degree an attempt on the part of the community to enforce certain of its wishes in regard to its relation to the rest of the city. The attempts to form independent political organizations have failed, probably because they were not related to concrete interests of the members of the community.

The rapid growth of the Negro community in Chicago has

been due principally to the migrations from the South. Its expansion over a vast territory as the population increased has fitted into the general pattern of urban growth and, at the same time, has been similar to the movement of other racial and migrant groups in the city. The growth of the community has been more than an addition of numbers. There has been a selection and segregation of economic and cultural groups which has determined the social structure of the community. The social structure has been defined more or less by the relative position of certain elements in the Negro population in the community. Within this social structure the Negro's status as a member of a moral order was determined largely by his position in the community. Since the family is the basic social group through which changes in status are mediated and accommodations to the urban environment are made, the statistics on the marriage and family relations of Negroes in Chicago have been related to the social structure of this community to show their significance as indexes to the changes taking place in the family.

## CHAPTER VII

### CHARACTER OF THE FAMILY IN THE SEVEN ZONES

When the statistics on the marriage and family relationships of Negroes were distributed in the seven zones of the South Side community, they exhibited variations in family life that were obscured when the Negro population was treated as an undifferentiated mass. These variations in family life coincided with the social structure of the community, which was reflected in the differences in the age and

TABLE XI

PERCENTAGE OF PERSONS TWENTY-ONE YEARS OF AGE AND OVER AND  
MALES IN THE SEVEN ZONES OF THE SOUTH SIDE NEGRO  
COMMUNITY, CHICAGO, 1920

	RATE PER HUNDRED OF THE POPULATION						
	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III	Zone IV	Zone V	Zone VI	Zone VII
Persons twenty-one years and over.....	71.6	76.3	77.6	75.4	72.7	69.0	70.5
Males.....	55.6	54.7	52.0	50.2	48.5	49.8	47.1

sex composition of these zones. Although nearly four-fifths of the Negroes in Chicago in 1920 were adults, only the third zone or the bright-light area and business center of the community showed such a predominance of grown people. The proportion of adults in the population was smaller in the areas near the Loop where the poorer southern migrants settled as well as in the areas of more stable community life occupied by the higher occupational classes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Burgess found the largest proportion of adults in the center, and in areas near the center, of the city. See Ernest W. Burgess, "The Determina-

Unlike many cities, Chicago, because of industrial opportunities, has attracted a larger number of Negro men than women. But the preponderance of males has appeared only in certain areas of the community. It was chiefly in those areas of deterioration in close proximity to the migrant families that Negro men tended to become segregated. Along State Street many of them who were homeless found shelter in the abandoned buildings or, if they could secure the price of a room, lodged in the colored men's hotel.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of males in the Negro population diminished in the succeeding zones, and in the better areas in the southern portion of the community there was a predominance of Negro women.

Many of the men who were concentrated in areas of deterioration were unmarried or had broken family ties. The proportion of men who were reported as single in the first two zones was more than one and a half times as great as in the seventh zone. Some of these men who were married in the South and had left their families there when they came to Chicago claimed to be unmarried. Of this type, for example, was the man who cooked and worked at odd jobs and at one time had a "hot dog stand." He ran away from his home in Mississippi when his widowed mother, who already had "twelve or thirteen children," married a man

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tion of Gradients in the Growth of the City," *Publication of the American Sociological Society*, XXVI (1927), 178-84.

In the South Side community the smaller proportion of adults in the first zone than in the third zone was a deviation from the general pattern of urban growth, which otherwise the Negro community tended to follow throughout its southern expansion. But when the Negro community was considered as a unit, the concentration of adults in the third zone fitted into the pattern of the Negro community because this area was a sort of Loop or business center.

<sup>1</sup> Nels Anderson, *The Hobo* (Chicago, 1923), p. 8.



with five children. He was twelve years old when he hoboed his way to Memphis, where three years later he married a woman who, he said, was

five years older than me. Well, I was working out on M—— Street— was a house man, you know, and she lived over there in the next yard. She had a porch you know, and I would look up there at her and she would make eyes at me and I would make 'em back to her. One day, she invited me over. Next time I met her was when there was a show in town and I went out there one night and come 'cross her and asked her what she wanted and she said a package of pop corn. Well I had never given her anything before, and when I asked her what she wanted, and she come saying, "a package of pop corn," I said, "Well, this is the wife for me."<sup>1</sup>

He remained twelve years with his wife, by whom he had a child who was in Memphis with "the auntie." In 1920 he came to Chicago because as he said, "me and her busted up."

A similar situation was found in regard to the marital status of many of the women in this section of the Negro community. Many of these women who came from the South had separated from their husbands without resorting to the formality of legal processes. Sometimes they reported themselves as divorced but probably more frequently as widowed.<sup>2</sup> They have only vague and sometimes bizarre notions of divorce. This was the case with the woman from Missis-

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> It will be observed in Table XII that the marked differences which appeared in the proportion of men single and married in the seven zones were not found in regard to the percentages of widowed and divorced persons in these zones. However, the proportion of men and women divorced seemed to conform to the general culture of these areas. For example, the proportion of persons divorced was relatively small in the first and second zones where the migrant families from the South tended to settle and in the three zones at the southern end of the community where family life was more stable. The highest percentage of persons divorced was in the fourth zone, or next to the third zone, where there was the greatest social disorganization.

issippi who said: "I don't know whether I'm Miss or Mrs. I been married, of course. . . . They told me that after you are separated three years you don't have to get a divorce, you could go on and marry." Or take another woman from the same state who explained concerning her appar-

TABLE XII

MARITAL STATUS OF THE POPULATION FIFTEEN YEARS OF AGE AND OVER IN THE SEVEN ZONES OF THE SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, CHICAGO, 1920

	RATE PER ONE HUNDRED POPULATION FIFTEEN YEARS AND OVER						
	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III	Zone IV	Zone V	Zone VI	Zone VII*
Single:							
Male.....	38.6	38.1	35.9	32.0	30.7	27.3	24.7
Female.....	16.4	16.0	16.9	17.1	17.4	16.8	17.1
Married:							
Male.....	52.1	54.4	55.8	61.1	62.5	65.6	68.5
Female.....	64.2	63.3	61.0	63.6	60.6	64.6	63.4
Widowed:							
Male.....	6.3	6.3	7.2	4.9	5.5	6.1	5.5
Female.....	18.2	19.4	20.3	17.0	20.1	17.3	18.2
Divorced:							
Male.....	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.4	0.8	0.9	1.2
Female.....	0.9	0.9	1.4	2.0	1.5	1.8	1.1

\* For one census tract in Woodlawn.

ently illegitimate birth: "You see I was raised without a father. My mother was a widow-woman way up in times and didn't get married until after I grewed up."

The significant decreases in the proportion of men single and the corresponding increases in the proportion of men married in the successive zones south of the third zone marked the progressive stabilization of family life in these

areas. The somewhat higher proportion of divorced persons in the fourth zone than in any other zone of the Negro community, probably, reflected the higher proportion of family disorganization in this area than in the areas farther south. But family life in this area, even in respect to disorganization, was a more orderly affair than in the poorer areas inhabited by the migrant families or in the third zone where family life tended to disappear.<sup>1</sup> The family background of the young woman who had secured a divorce from her husband throws some light on the character of some of the families in this area and at the same time shows the nature of the causes for divorce in those levels of the Negro population that use the courts for the dissolution of marriage.

I was born in New Orleans in 1903. My mother and father had always lived there. My mother was the daughter of a Frenchman, who was a bricklayer, and a mulatto creole, the child of a slave and a white man. My grandfather had a lot upon which he and his sons built the home. This home was sold upon the death of my grandmother and grandfather and the money was divided among the children who went to live with a great aunt, who was married to a white man, a train conductor. . . . We always called our white granduncle grandpa, because he had been a father to my mother and we knew no other grandfather. He was exceedingly kind and always treated us as his blood relations. . . .

My mother was sent to school by the aunt who reared her. After completing the grammar school she became a teacher in a country school in Mound Bayou. She has often told me of her experience of having to trudge through mud to get to school. Many of her pupils were older than herself. After teaching there a year she returned to New Orleans where she came into contact with my father, whom she had known since childhood. My father was the son of a mulatto of German and Negro mixture. His mother was Spanish. When my father reached manhood, he became a purser on a ship. He was doing

<sup>1</sup> This will be confirmed in subsequent chapters dealing with desertion, non-support, illegitimacy, and juvenile delinquency.

this when he became engaged to my mother. He passed for white on the ship in order to hold his position. My mother and father owned their own home in New Orleans. There was one other child—a boy. It was my father's greatest ambition for his family to move away from New Orleans so that his children could have greater educational advantages. He was promoted to the position of steward on his boat. He held this position only for several months when he returned home mysteriously ill and died within three days. My family has always thought he was poisoned through jealousy because of his promotion. After my father's death my mother went to work. When we were large enough to go to school my mother moved with me to Chicago and sent later for my brother. When my mother first came here she worked in domestic service. Later she took a position as a reception girl in a large studio. Because of her intelligence she was promoted to the position of assistant bookkeeper. In the meantime, my brother and I went to school. My brother finished grammar school at the age of twelve and entered high school. He only went two years to high school because my mother was not able to send him longer. He went to work in the studio with my mother and learned to be a dark room man. All during this time he took lessons on the cornet and looked forward to becoming a musician. After working two years at this place he was offered a position in one of the popular orchestras in Chicago. He took this position and advanced in the profession until now he has charge of one of the largest orchestras in the West. He is not married. My brother stopped school because it was thought that I, being a girl, should continue in school. I completed the commercial course in the Wendell Phillips High School, after finishing grammar school at the age of twelve. After finishing high school I took a short course in secretarial work in one of the business colleges at night and worked as a secretary in a social agency.

In 1922 I was married to a young Jamaican who at that time was a chiropodist. A boy was born after a year. We lived together two years and then separated because we found it impossible to continue to live together. He had been brought up in Jamaica where the men were lords and the women worked as slaves. For example, he believed in dressing up and going about in other women's company while his wife and children were to go along on the barest necessities and live in seclusion. It became necessary for me to live with my mother as he



would not provide for me and my child. After two years of separation I got a divorce on grounds of non-support and desertion. I went back to my profession when I became separated from him in order to provide a living for my son and myself. I am now living with my mother who owns the home in which we live.<sup>1</sup>

The family background of this woman was quite different from the Negroes who came from the southern plantations. It represented the social background of many members of the mulatto class which, as we observed, tended to become segregated in the southern half of the Negro community. Many members of this class, who had already secured some economic competence and were home owners in the South, have definite ambitions for their children that accord with their status in the Negro world. Although the cultural conflict that became the cause of disorganization in this particular family is not frequent because of the relatively few cases of intermarriage with other racial groups, it indicates the type of disorganization in Negro families that arises from conflicting conceptions of life. These conceptions of life reflect the individual's status in the Negro world and the status of the individual is registered to a large extent in his position in the community. This zone was an area in which those sections of the Negro population, which were controlled by the mores and the public opinion of the community, tended to become segregated in exclusive neighborhoods as far as possible. It was among this class that the breaking of marriage ties was most likely to conform to institutional provisions.

The account that a young college woman wrote of the cause of divorce in her family showed how, in the case of marriage between persons representing divergent cultural

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

backgrounds in the Negro population, similar conflicts arise.

My mother and father, so my mother relates, were never really in love. My father was much sought after by the girls in the neighborhood where he and mother lived, and he sought only mother. Perhaps my father was really in love—he's never told me, but to mother I know it was a case of going with someone that everyone else wanted. She was only seventeen at the time; my father being four years older. My mother's mother had always been against the X— family. To her they were a bunch of "no-gooders" who had nothing and never would have anything. This side of my family 'tis true has not risen above the average level. It has always been an ambitionless family, and as a result has been at a stand still. However, my mother wouldn't listen to all that my grandmother said, however, and she and my father were married secretly at City Hall. Their marriage remained secret until the marriage license printed in a newspaper happened to be noticed by some busy body who immediately brought the information to my grandmother. Surprisingly, so mother says, my grandmother didn't raise the roof, but she did insist that my mother and father be married again in the Catholic Church. They were. In spite of the two ceremonies, however, the union wasn't a lasting one. The first cause of conflict was when he wanted to take my mother to live in a basement flat. Grandmother said that a daughter of hers could not live in a basement and insisted that they live with her. My mother was and always will be, I imagine, a very energetic, ambitious person with plenty of back bone, stick-to-itiveness and initiative. My father on the contrary while having a very good disposition was shiftless, rather lazy, an unsuccessful gambler, and not a good home maker. Here the two dispositions clashed. My mother always jokes about her separation from my father. She always says, "I told him that he could leave (they had always lived in my grandmother's home) until he could make a home for me and the baby, and he never came back."<sup>1</sup>

It is not without significance that this young woman's mother came from a family of mulattoes with whose history

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

she was acquainted for several generations, while her father's family, of whom she had little knowledge and with whom she seldom associated, represented the blacks from the plantation.

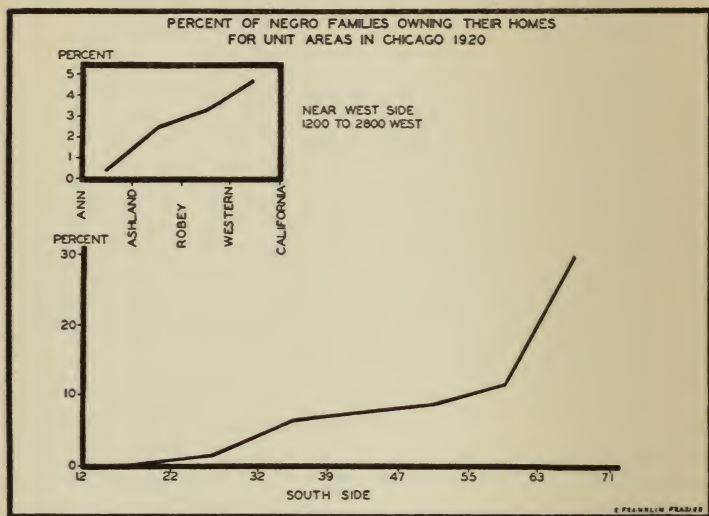
It is not among this class only that divorce occurs. After residence in the city the migrant from the South becomes acquainted with the laws regarding his marriage relations. He conforms to these regulations in order to secure his own freedom and often out of fear of unpleasant consequences if he attempts to enter new marriage relations. For example, there was the woman in the third zone who filed suit for divorce from her husband, a "Hoodoo Doctor," who had taken \$500 from her to pay on a home. Or take the young laborer in the same area who became tired of the seventeen-year-old girl who had come to Chicago from their home in the South to marry him. Shortly after their marriage, this man, taking advantage of his wife's ignorance of legal processes, secretly arranged a divorce from her.

In the next two zones the proportion of men married continued to increase. And in the seventh zone, where the higher occupational classes made up the majority of the population, three-fourths of the men were married and only about one person out of a hundred was divorced. Although there was the same proportion of women widowed as in the first zone, widowhood in this area was not the same uncertain marital status that was found in the first zone. It did not mean desertion, illegitimate motherhood, and irregular separation. Many of the widowed women in this area were enjoying the fruits of their husbands' thrift and foresight. They lived in their own homes, or more frequently with their children for whom they had sacrificed in order that the latter might reach their present status. This was the area

distinguished by considerable home ownership which was at the basis of its stable family life.<sup>1</sup>

Nothing showed so vividly the progressive stabilization of Negro family life in the seven zones of the community as the increase in home ownership for the successive areas. Although in 1920 less than one Negro family out of every

CHART VIII



fourteen owned its home in Chicago, from the point of view of the distribution of home ownership in the Negro com-

<sup>1</sup> Settlements of Negroes outside of the South Side community exhibited variations in the marital status of the population that accorded with the general culture of these areas. Among the sixty families in Roseland, about two miles south of the South Side community, 77.1 per cent of the men and 70.1 per cent of the women were married. There were no divorced persons of either sex and no widowers. Only 3.9 per cent of the women were returned by the census as widowed. In Morgan Park, at the extreme southern end of the city, about 70 per cent of the men and women were married and less than 1 per cent of the men and women were returned as divorced. There were com-



munity this was true only of the families in the fourth zone or the center of the community. The three zones north and south of this area varied considerably in respect to home ownership. In the first zone, where there was considerable

TABLE XIII

RATE OF HOME OWNERSHIP; AVERAGE NUMBER OF FAMILIES; AND AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER DWELLING IN THE SEVEN ZONES OF THE SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, CHICAGO, 1920

	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III	Zone IV	Zone V	Zone VI	Zone VII
Home ownership.....	0	1.2	6.2	7.2	8.3	11.4	29.8
Number of families per dwelling	2.6	2.0	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.8
Number of persons per dwelling	10.5	8.7	9.1	8.9	8.0	7.5	7.1

crowding<sup>1</sup> of the poorer migrant families from the South in the lowest type of houses<sup>2</sup> in which Negroes lived, there was

paratively few widowed persons. West of the seventh zone in the South Side community in Englewood, where there were about 500 Negro families in 1920, the marital status was similar to the seventh zone except that there were relatively fewer widowers and women and only  $\frac{4}{10}$  of 1 per cent of both sexes divorced. In the settlement on the West Side which has expanded along Lake Street, the marital status of the Negro population was similar to the third and fourth zones of the South Side community. On the other hand, the 101 Negro families in the Lower North Side settlement for which census data were secured showed similar characteristics to the first zone. Here too, the southern migrants had settled (see chap. vi). In this area a fourth of the women were widowed but there were comparatively few divorced persons. See Table IV, Appendix B.

<sup>1</sup> In Table XIII it will be observed that Zone I showed a higher average number of families and persons per dwelling than any zone in the South Side community. This fact will be referred to later, in the discussion on the variation in the size of the family in these areas.

<sup>2</sup> *The Negro in Chicago*, p. 186. Concerning the classification of houses inhabited by Negroes, the report gave the following: "A rough classification of Negro housing according to types, ranging from the best, designated as 'Type A,' to the poorest, designated as 'Type D,' was made by the Commis-

no home ownership. A description of the dwellings at that time showed that,

most of these dwellings were frail, flimsy, tottering, unkempt, and some of them literally falling apart. Little repairing is done from year to year. Consequently their state grows progressively worse, and they are now even less habitable than when the surveys quoted at the beginning of this section were made. The surroundings in these localities were in a condition of extreme neglect, with little apparent effort to observe the laws of sanitation. Streets, alleys, and vacant lots contained garbage, rubbish, and litter of all kinds. It is difficult to enforce health regulations.<sup>1</sup>

In the next zone, where white people still lived in the large, well-built, and ornate dwellings on the once fashionable residential streets—Michigan, Indiana, and Prairie avenues—Negro families had filtered in and occupied the hundreds of old houses that surrounded the white homes.<sup>2</sup> Only about one Negro family out of every hundred was living in its own home. The forty-six families who owned their homes<sup>3</sup> represented a small group of thrifty and rising

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sion on the basis of a block survey comprising 238 blocks, covering all the main areas of Negro residences and data concerning 274 families, scattered through 238 blocks, one or two to a block, whose histories and housing experiences were intensively studied by the Commission's investigators. Approximately 5 per cent of Chicago's Negro population live in 'Type A' houses, 10 per cent in 'Type B,' 40 per cent in 'Type C,' and 45 per cent in the poorest, 'Type D.'"

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190. Many of the homes in this area were described as follows: "In a large number of buildings families were obliged to use common toilets located in halls or back yards. The dwellings were out of repair in some respects in nearly every instance. Defects of this kind were often in the plumbing. Leaky toilets or water pipes were common complaints. Some toilets did not flush. Some sinks were leaky, as were some of the roofs. In some houses windows or doors were broken, loose, or sagging. Some houses were very dirty" (*ibid.*, p. 191).

<sup>3</sup> See Table V, Appendix B.

families in the Negro population. Typical of this group was the family of a school teacher who wrote as follows concerning her family background.

My father came to Chicago in his early twenties. He came to Chicago because it was larger than Detroit. He had gone to Detroit from the small towns of Ontario, Canada, because wages were better and work more plentiful in the larger cities. His father's sister lived in Chicago, so possibly that was another reason for his coming to this city. However, his coming was merely an unromantic fact. After coming he had no reason to leave, therefore he remained. He has lived here over thirty years in which he had had changes of fortune that are inevitable in the life of mortals. When he was about twenty-nine years of age he married a young woman who had come to Chicago from New Orleans on a visit.

My father worked at Chicago Beach Hotel for a number of years. He also owned and, with the help of his wife, operated a delicatessen on 52nd and Lake Park Avenue. In addition to the responsibility of the store the mother had to care for the rooms upstairs that were rented to young men working at the Chicago Beach under my father.<sup>1</sup>

The mother of this school teacher supplemented the picture of this family with the statement:

I am the mother of six children. I have lived in Chicago thirty-three years last August. My native home is in McComb, Mississippi. My mother and father were slaves. My mother was born just four years before what was known as "peace declared." My mother was born in Mississippi, but my father was born in Virginia. I don't remember the town. There were six of us children. When I was a girl about five years old my parents moved to Louisiana. Three children were born in Mississippi and three in Louisiana.

I know so many people who were born in the South, who are ashamed to admit it. But I am not, I am just as proud as I can be. The place I call home was in New Orleans, Louisiana. I never belonged to any organizations. I accepted Christ when I was seventeen years old in the Baptist Church in New Orleans. My father passed away when I was eight years old and left my mother with three children

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

and after the death of my father my mother lost a younger child; that left just her and my brother and myself. I never got higher than the seventh grade in grammar school. My mother was not an educated woman. After death came into the home—that was by the time I was fifteen years old, I had to go to work and worked until I came to Chicago. I came to Chicago when I was eighteen years of age. After I came here I stayed. I came first to visit my aunt but just stayed here. My life was a very humble life. I never had a chance to socialize much. Mother and brother and myself had to make the living. At that time they were not paying any good salaries in New Orleans. My mother was a very good cook and dressmaker, but having no education she figured that if I learned to read and write, that was all that was necessary. That was why when I was married that I made up my own mind that I was going to give my children an advantage that I never had.

My husband was born in Chatham, Ontario. There were nine children of them. Of that nine, four are still living. His mother passed away about thirty-eight years ago. His father who was a soldier in the Civil War just passed away two years ago in December. He spent some time in the Soldiers' Home. He had a daughter out West and went out there because he liked the climate. He had two lovely homes out there. He was eighty-four years old in February. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio, and after the war he went to Canada. He married his wife there in Canada. His people were born in Virginia and they were Indian and white mixed. My husband and his mother and all of the children didn't come in what was known as the Underground Railway. They were always free. . . .

There are only four children living now. (The school teacher) is the oldest of the four. The others are in high school. My other boy failed in a couple of his studies and became discouraged, you know, but I am hoping that he will go back as soon as possible. The second girl is slow but she is determined to come out of high school. If she is determined to come out, I am determined to keep her in. We own our home. The home was ours about three years before we moved in. We have been married thirty years and moved three times in thirty years. When we moved here nineteen years ago, the 9th of October, 1909, there were four colored families in this neighborhood. And of that four—Dr. T——, Mrs. G—— —only three with ourselves owned homes. . . .



Our neighbors that lived just north of us, they wanted us to rent this house to white and not to colored. They thought it was terrible to live beside colored people. All these buildings were white, you know. But it was our house, and we rented to colored. That big flat building across the street was the first one of these buildings to go to colored and I think after two or three years they let these three just north of us to colored. They had a sign on there "Only high class colored people." That sign stayed on there two or three years. The last white family moved from here about six years ago. . . .

I have never seen the day that I would want to be anything other than a Negro. I am just as happy as Mr. Rockefeller. I am a Negro and I demand the same respect as anybody else. It is not the race, it is who you are. I have lived 51 years in this life and I do not figure any one having a better time in a plain everyday life than I have. I just felt so bad when I heard a friend of ours say one day that he would rather be anything rather than to be a Negro. All of my life I have been thrown in touch with people of all kinds. I consider it a privilege to be born poor because otherwise probably I would not have seen things I have seen in my life.<sup>1</sup>

Home ownership in the third zone showed a decided increase, for about one Negro family out of every sixteen owned its home. On the whole the houses in this area showed age and were rapidly deteriorating.<sup>2</sup> But, on Grand Boulevard and South Park Avenue, Negroes of the professional and business classes had bought the substantial old family residences that had been abandoned by whites. There were other neighborhoods of Negro property owners, belonging chiefly to the upper classes, who attempted to resist the disorganization that characterized this area.

The slight increase in home ownership in the next zone indicated the same tendency of the upper levels of the Negro population and more stable families to seek a congenial environment. Representative of this group was the family of a physician who came from a settlement of free mulattoes

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> *The Negro in Chicago*, p. 191.

in one of the northern states. This physician's paternal grandfather was among those free mulattoes who left the state of North Carolina early in the nineteenth century, when restrictive legislation was passed against this group, and helped to establish this settlement. Soon after this physician began the practice of medicine in Chicago he bought a home in Ravenswood, but later moved to the South Side. He said: "The only reason that I moved away from there—my children were getting up where they would be eight or nine years of age and we had an idea we wanted them to meet with children of their own race whom they would be associated with in the future."<sup>1</sup> His experience on the South Side was typical of the efforts of the upper classes to maintain the character of their neighborhoods in harmony with their standards of living.

\* We moved from 43rd because the neighborhood inside of two years had gone down nearly 100 per cent. Then we moved to 50th street. Inside of two years that neighborhood had gone down. That group in Washington Park Court has been the sole salvation of that block. That is the only block that has held its real estate value. The neighborhood organization is composed of residents of Washington Park Court. We have been organized about three or four years. A man across the street put a sign up in his window "trucking and hauling." We tried to persuade him to take it down and he would not do it, so we had him arrested. Another woman opened up a delicatessen and we persuaded her not to for about two or three weeks, but she ignored us so we had her arrested. We have our meetings once or twice a month. We have had the alderman out to inform him that we wanted his full co-operation. We forced two undesirable families to move out of the block. We closed up one disorderly house. We tried to get the children together and keep up their morals. We have an executive board, and have employed a custodian of the block. Before moving over here I had no knowledge of the danger involved in the deterioration of a colored neighborhood.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The changes which have taken place in this area, in regard to the type of Negro families which have gradually moved in, were shown in the account given by a colored school teacher of her experience with one of these families.

When I began teaching at the Farren School there were no colored children there, but very well-to-do white people who lived in the neighborhood. Later children of the better class families who were moving in the district began coming to the school. There were no problems for they acted just like the white children. They played with them and chummed with them. There were no difficulties. But later the lower class Negroes began moving into the district. Then the trouble began. I remember the first Negro family of the lower class who entered our school. It was the R's. Mr. R. had six boys and a girl. They were terrible. They were altogether different from the white or colored students in our school. One of the boys was sent to the Penitentiary for life for murder, and he is still there. The oldest boy was nothing but a thief and a thug. He was in and out of the prison. I have lost track of the others who gave trouble, but I remember the youngest one. He was only twelve years old at the time. One day Mr. R. came to the school and said, "I will do anything you teachers tell me to do to save this last child. I have been wrong all along and didn't understand the real situation. I came here from Georgia to give my children an opportunity to get an education but I have lost all of them and I want you to help me to save this one. Any time you say, I will whip him at home and come to the school and whip him." I told him that whipping wouldn't do the boy any good, and it was probably too late to save him, that he would have to appeal to the boy in some other way. We were unable to do anything with the boy and he just refused to go to school. I lost track of the family until a few months ago. I was standing on the corner of Indiana and 35th Street when a young man walked up to me and said, "Mrs. X, you don't remember me, do you?" I told him who he was, for I recognized him immediately as the youngest R. boy. He told me that he was playing a piano in a cabaret.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

In the sixth zone, between Garfield Boulevard and Sixty-third Street, where 857 Negro families were living in 1920, 99 families owned their homes. The proportion of families owning their homes in this area was nearly 50 per cent higher than the average for the entire Negro population in the city. Home ownership in this zone was not evenly distributed, for the general character of this area was affected by railroad lines on the west and south.<sup>1</sup> The families that found their way into the areas bordering the railroad property were on a lower level of culture than those that have moved into the more desirable sections. On the whole, the increase in home ownership in this zone was due to the presence of the more industrious and stable families who were distinguished from the mass of the Negro population. There was a relatively large percentage of skilled laborers and a smaller percentage of the women employed than in any other zone except the seventh. Moreover, this area had a somewhat larger percentage of the professional classes than any of the areas north of this zone. One of the first families of the professional class to move into the most desirable section of this zone was a dentist of national renown, who was married to a woman who could boast of six generations of free ancestry. Members of her immediate family had distinguished themselves while others had intermarried with some of the most successful Negro families in the country. Since 1920, members of the professional classes and those possessing some background of culture have continued to move into this section. At the same time, as this area has become more com-

<sup>1</sup> Attention has already been called to the fact that the zones which have been used as units for measuring the differences in the Negro community were not homogeneous cultural areas. Beginning with the fourth zone their general character has been affected by the railroad lines running through the western part of these areas.



pletely a Negro section, less desirable families have settled here, and forced the older inhabitants to look elsewhere for a congenial environment.

The better-class families have been seeking better neighborhoods in the seventh zone beyond Sixty-third Street. In the section of this zone which forms a part of Woodlawn there has been for many years a small group of Negro families who represented the most stable elements in the Negro population.<sup>1</sup> In 1920, 30 per cent of these families, some of whom were of the professional classes, owned their homes. Many of these houses were single-family residences. Eight of the twenty families that had moved beyond Sixty-seventh Street were also home owners. A school teacher who lived in this area came from a family that was representative of the background from which Negroes with family traditions have come. She was born in Augusta, Georgia, and was educated, by her parents, in one of the larger Negro colleges. Her paternal grandfather who was free, as well as his wife, had been a piano-tuner and had owned his home and other property in the same city. She took pride in the fact that her father, now deceased, was one of the first graduates of a well-known Negro college in the South. After finishing college he became a postal clerk. Her mother, the only offspring of a slave and a white man who bought her, had taught school for some years after graduating from the

<sup>1</sup> Other settlements of Negroes showed variations in home ownership that reflected the general culture of these areas. In Roseland, where there was stable family life, forty-seven of the sixty families owned their homes. Seventy-three per cent of the Negro families in Morgan Park were home owners and in Englewood 25 per cent of the families owned their homes. On the Near West Side only 3 per cent of the families were home owners, while in the settlement on the Near North Side there were no home owners. See Table V, Appendix B.

same school. Her older brothers and sisters had always helped the younger members of the family to acquire an education and thereby maintain the status of the family. One of her sisters was also a school teacher, while one brother was a journalist and another an electrician. She was a member of the Congregational church located in this area, and belonged to one of the national Negro Greek letter societies.

#### SIZE OF FAMILIES

One of the apparent effects of urban life on the Negro population has been the decrease in the size of families. During the decade between 1910 and 1920, when considerable numbers of Negroes moved to cities, there was a marked decrease in the proportion of children under five years of age in the population.<sup>1</sup> More specifically, in Chicago in 1920 there were only 52 children under fifteen, as compared with 136 children of the same age for the whole country, to each 100 Negro women from fifteen to forty-four years of age. A study of every tenth Negro family or household<sup>2</sup> in Chicago in 1920 showed that 60 per cent of the employed male heads of households were without dependent children.<sup>3</sup> But the effects of city life on the size of the family have not been the same in all sections of the Negro population. This was shown

<sup>1</sup> *United States Census, 1920, II, 146.*

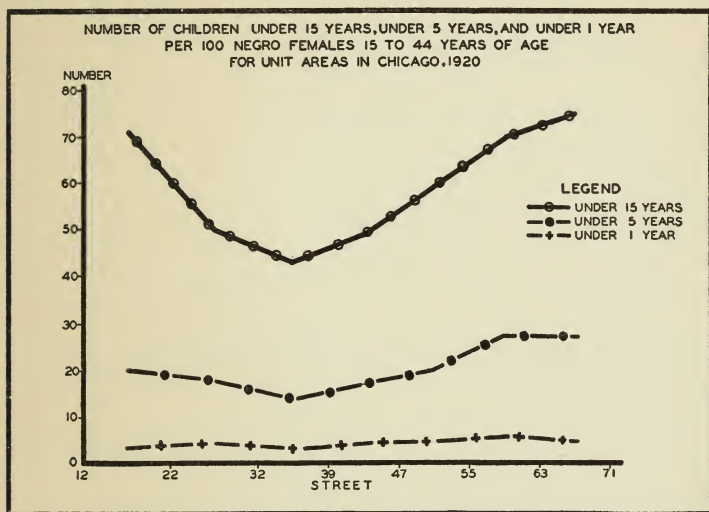
<sup>2</sup> The United States Census defines a family as a "group of persons, whether related by blood or not, who live together as one household, usually sharing the same table" (*ibid.*, p. 1265).

<sup>3</sup> "Family Support and Dependency among Chicago Negroes: A Study of Unpublished Census Data," *Social Service Review*, III, No. 4, 544-45. Miss Irene J. Graham, who secured information "for every tenth census 'family,' or household returned as Negro," found that 1,753 or 59.8 per cent of 2,930 employed male heads of families had no dependent children and that 1,937 out of 2,971 male heads had no children under fourteen. As these statistics were not related to the social structure and physical organization of the Ne-

in the variations in the size of the family in the different sections of the Negro community where the different classes and elements in the Negro population tended to become segregated.

In the first zone, where the poorer migrants from the South first settled, there was a considerably larger propor-

CHART IX



tion of children under fifteen to women of child-bearing age than for the city as a whole.<sup>1</sup> At the same time these families

gro community, they represented average conditions in the Negro population considered abstractly, and did not bring out the important differences between the several classes in the Negro population or sections of the Negro community.

<sup>1</sup> In Chicago, in 1920, the average size of the Negro "family" or household as defined by the census was 4.3 persons or the same as the whole city. It appears from Table XIV that the size of the Negro family was smaller in the zones where the migrant families tended to be segregated at one end of the

probably showed the effects of the migrations, for there were relatively few children under five years of age. In the next zone the decline in family life was indicated by the marked decrease in the proportion of children in the population and the corresponding increase in the average size of

TABLE XIV

AVERAGE SIZE OF THE FAMILY AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN TO ONE HUNDRED FEMALES FIFTEEN TO FORTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE IN THE SEVEN ZONES OF THE SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, CHICAGO, 1920

	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III	Zone IV	Zone V	Zone VI	Zone VII
Average size of the family*.....	3.8	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.0	3.7
Children:							
Under 15.....	70.7	49.9	42.8	48.6	59.5	69.4	74.1
Under 5.....	19.8	17.6	14.3	17.3	20.0	26.9	27.6
Under 1.....	3.3	4.3	3.3	4.5	4.8	5.6	4.9

\* Household.

households which in many cases included roomers. The increase in the number of children under one year of age

community and in the areas at the other end of the community where the higher classes were concentrated, and that the average size of the family was largest in the third zone, which we have seen was the most disorganized area in the community. But it will be observed in this Table that the variations in the average size of the family show opposite tendencies to the variations in the ratio of children under fifteen years of age to females from fifteen to forty-four years of age. Therefore, it appears that the size of the household is not a true measure of the size of the family group. A better measure of the size of the Negro family in these different areas is the ratio of children to women of child-bearing age. The discussion concerning the variations in the size of the family will show that the average size of the household is raised by lodgers in the families in those areas where there were few children. It is also reasonable to infer from the statistics that, in the first zone, where we found (p. 127) a relatively large number of families and persons, on the average, to the dwelling, these families or households though smaller than in some other areas represented real family groups because of the greater proportion of children.



probably indicated the southward drift of the migrant families that had become established in the city.

In the third zone, except for the comparatively few stable families isolated in well-kept neighborhoods, Negro family life tended to disappear.<sup>1</sup> With less than a third as many children under fifteen to the women of child-bearing age as among the Negro population of the country as a whole, and with nearly four-fifths of its inhabitants adults and the majority of them males, this zone appeared in marked contrast to the remainder of the community. The large households in this zone were composed of lodgers instead of children. A study of 99 families in this area showed that 72 had lodgers.<sup>2</sup> This was the area, as we have seen, of cabarets, saloons, gambling places, and billiard halls. At one time Jack Johnson conducted a cabaret, which was the center of night life, on State Street near Thirty-fifth. Several cabarets in this area were closed after murders. Here was the headquarters of a club composed of "pimps" who made their living off women. A Jewish college woman, whose father once had a saloon in this area, described the neighborhood in which she lived and some of its characters.

We moved into the neighborhood in 1913. We moved into this neighborhood for business purposes. The saloon was there when we moved in. Father and mother, brother and sister. Three children. My sister was born in that neighborhood. I became easily adjusted to the neighborhood. I started school a few months after I moved there. I went to the first grade at the Mosely School. There were not as many

<sup>1</sup> Attention has already been called to the fact that this area was related to the organization of the Negro community somewhat as the business center was related to the entire city. It corresponds to what Mowrer has characterized as the non-family area (Ernest R. Mowrer, *Family Disorganization* [Chicago, 1927], pp. 110-11).

<sup>2</sup> *The Negro in Chicago*, p. 155. Miss Graham found in her sample of 2,361 Negro families 824 with roomers (*loc. cit.*, p. 551).

colored children as there were later on when I got to about fifth grade. Then there was a rapid increase of Negroes to the school. We got along very well. Sometimes we walked to school together.

The neighborhood around 29th and Federal when we first moved in was fair. When the Negroes moved in from the South they became worse. Their houses were dilapidated old frame houses. Every house down on Dearborn Street was a house of vice. I never noticed the places until I got older. When I grew older, it dawned upon me. I saw white men come around from beyond the tracks and go into those houses—colored men, too. My mother said, "Now you stay away from any of those places around there." You know, I always hated a person who went in there. That is just the way I felt. I didn't like the idea of my father having the saloon around there. He conducted it very nicely though. They used to cut each other outside but never in the saloon. . . .

Women came into the saloon. They could just come in to buy beer. They were never allowed behind the swinging doors. Next to the saloon in this house there was an old woman and her son, Buster, and her daughter. This son he got a job. He was a nice little fellow. But later on he went wrong. The mother was heart-broken. I don't remember any of the people down the street. There were mostly rooming houses down the street. Some were vice. Families were living in some with little children. On one corner was a store. But most of the time I lived there it was a church. I don't know much about it, whether it was the holy-rollers or not. I would hear people screaming and I would wonder what was going on. We used to peek in the windows and some were getting baptized. Well, they were floating families. They couldn't stay in a place very long because they could not pay the rent. Their husbands would drink up the money or gamble. Lots of the women went out to work. Right next door on 29th Street there was a two-story house. Upstairs lived one colored woman all alone. Sometimes I would sit on her front stairs and she would tell me about the South. Lots of times I would like to go up and see what her house looked like, but she never invited me. Down the street lived a colored woman and her mother—a real old woman. When we moved out she was still there. She used to wear a white dress and a bonnet like the Salvation Army women wear. She was a church worker. This old lady would sit out on her porch lots of times waiting for her daughter to return from

work. There was a saloon across the street from us on the corner, and another one on the opposite corner. One was owned by an Italian.

Tom, who worked for us, was a good fellow. He was our bartender. He was plump—I should say, weighed about 200 pounds. He was a regular business man. He didn't drink much. He sold a lot of whiskey but he never drank much himself. He was a good business man. The Stockyards men would come in to get their checks cashed—put some in the bank and spend some in the saloon. They would go out and shoot craps and then come back after they had lost their money and say to Tom, "If you loan me a dollar, I will pay it back to you on Monday," and he would say, "Well if I loan you a dollar you will have to give me \$2.00 on Monday." And he would get it too. . . .

We had another colored fellow who worked for us. His name was Little George. I have never seen a man more careful about his clothes as he was. He would change his collars twice a day. He would wear a brown derby hat like Moon Mullins. He was a mulatto. He was a most cultured man, a brilliant scholar. But he was the most immoral man, my father said, he ever knew. My father said, it was very funny, but as far as he was concerned, he said the colored man who is very dark ranks far better in his opinion than the light colored man. Those men who would unload the boats—the stockyard workers—all types of workers would come into the store. You could have a nice conversation with them when they were sober. But the ones who knew the most of life were the musicians. My father said that they knew so much of life. They are very well read in the school of life. They were really interesting people to talk to. They really could play. Sometimes the police would come into our saloon and search the men for guns, but they seldom found any.

King Doe Doe was a colored man about forty years old—very well educated man and he was a wonderful letterist. He could print gorgeous. He could figure and he could do all kinds of things in mathematics. He knew literature. Could tell you all about Shakespeare. He would just hang around there. He would drink whenever he would get any money. We moved away because they closed the saloons. One colored man raised my sister D——. He was a real old black colored man. We called him Uncle Charlie. He used to wheel my sister in the buggy all the time. He was awfully nice. He taught me how to roller skate. He was the man my father used to send lots of times to the

bank with money. Sometimes he would be sitting on the steps thinking. I don't know, I wish I knew what he was thinking about. You know the inside of peach seeds he would carve them into little baskets with designs. He always used to tell us to save them. He was quiet and would sit in the corner and carve peach seeds. All the fellows in the store had a lot of respect for Uncle Charlie. They were all the type of men Moon Mullins is.<sup>1</sup>

Although the open saloon has disappeared from this area, there has been no fundamental change in the character of the area. This zone has continued to deteriorate and become an area for business and industry. The white people who live in this zone have, as in the case of the saloon-keeper, only a symbiotic relationship to the rest of the community. The complete dissolution of community life has been accompanied by an increase in crime and violence. A catalogue of violence during a week on the South Side included happenings chiefly within this area.

Within the past week four deliberate murders and more than a half dozen cuttings and shootings have taken place on the South Side. . . . Women held the upper hand in the majority of shootings and cuttings during the past seven days, and the majority of the victims were men.

Sunday, July 28, Birda Self killed Jasper Mackey in front of 3144 Giles Avenue following an argument in their home at 3142 Giles Avenue. Monday Hattie Zenders killed Eddie Hughes, alias Joe Williams, in the street near 16 East 42nd Street, following an argument about the woman's niece, whom Hughes is charged with seducing. On the same day Alice Green killed William Watts at 4627 Federal Street in a quarrel and Virgil Kruser murdered Robert Moore, 5607 Prairie Avenue, in a jealous rage.

#### OTHER CASUALTIES

Helen Hubbard stabbed her husband Charles Monday night and is in custody awaiting the outcome of his condition. The fight occurred in their home at 5037 State Street. Denton Jeffries is in the Bridewell

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.



hospital suffering from a knife wound in the lung inflicted by Annie Powell, 458 Bowen Avenue, at his home, 3531 Federal Avenue. Sunday, Alice Walker, 3845 Vincennes Avenue was clubbed about the head and face by her sweetheart, Venie Brown, after they had quarreled. Less Lyon and Alex Lyon fought over some small change and Less is under the care of a doctor.

Sterling Jones and John Henry Robinson both claimed ownership of the same cap, and that was the opportunity for knife flashing, resulting in Jones being rushed to the County hospital with a gash in the left side.<sup>1</sup>

The fourth zone, which was marginal in character, appeared about the same as the second zone in regard to the size of families. While in numerous cases the household was made up of roomers, the presence of real family groups was indicated by the increased proportion of children in the population. It was, however, in the next three zones, where we have noted the progressive stabilization of family life, that a significant increase in the proportion of children in the population was found in conjunction with a gradual decline in the size of the household. In fact, in these three areas, especially the last two, there was a much larger proportion of children under five years of age than in the area occupied by the poorer migrant families. The development of normal family life in the seventh zone, where many of the families occupied single-family houses which they owned, was registered in the comparatively small size of the household and the high proportion of children in the population. Although the average size of the Negro family in this area was smaller than for the Negro population in the country as a whole, it was larger even than in those sections of the community inhabited by the poorer migrants from the South. It was among the migrants that death and disease and brok-

<sup>1</sup> The *Chicago Defender*, August 2, 1929.

en homes, with children scattered among relatives, reduced the size of the family group.<sup>1</sup> The increase in the proportion of children in the population was another index to the progressive stabilization of family life in these successive areas.<sup>2</sup>

The large number of broken homes among the southern migrants was reflected in the proportion of families having female heads.<sup>3</sup> In the first two zones, where these families generally settled, women were heads of over a fifth of the families. In many cases these women had been deserted by their husbands. In the next three zones the proportion of families having female heads still amounted to a fifth of the families. Although some of these women had been deserted, they probably represented widowed and divorced persons to a greater extent than the same class in the first and second

<sup>1</sup> A study made of wage-earning families in 1919 showed the average size of the Negro families studied to be 3.4 persons, which was less than any of the other nationalities. The averages for the families composing the three groups studied varied considerably. The average size of the 274 families in the block study was 3.1; for the 30 families in the nursing service group, 4.6; while the 23 families in the charity group averaged 5.5 persons. It was not known whether these variations were due to the size of the sampling or to the fact that the lower economic group receiving social service had larger families (Ernest W. Burgess, "Special Report I. A Study of Wage-earning Families in Chicago," *Report of the Health Insurance Commission of the State of Illinois*, May 1, 1919, pp. 191, 192.)

<sup>2</sup> Settlements of Negroes, referred to already, outside of the South Side community, showed variations that conformed to the character of these areas. Englewood and Woodlawn which have been described as areas of stable family life had even a larger proportion of children in the population than the seventh zone. Morgan Park, another home-owning area, with 115.4 children under fifteen to each one hundred women of child-bearing age, approached the proportion for the whole country, while in the disorganized area on the Lower North Side there were only 31.2 children to each one hundred women of child-bearing age. See Table VI, Appendix B.

<sup>3</sup> Miss Graham found in her sample of 3,339 Negro families 435 families with female heads (*loc. cit.*, p. 546).

zones.<sup>1</sup> The significant decline in the proportion of female heads of families in the last two zones corresponded with the indexes of stable family life which have already been considered.

The differences in the organization of the Negro family in these seven areas were also reflected in the proportion of young women married. In the first two zones, where, as we have seen, the poorer southern migrants generally settled,

TABLE XV

FEMALE HEADS OF FAMILIES AND FEMALES FIFTEEN TO NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE MARRIED, IN THE SEVEN ZONES OF THE SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, CHICAGO, 1920

	RATE PER ONE HUNDRED POPULATION						
	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III	Zone IV	Zone V	Zone VI	Zone VII
Female heads of families.....	22.0	23.1	20.8	20.4	20.5	15.2	11.9
Married females fifteen to nineteen.....	2.8	2.5	2.1	2.1	1.8	2.1	0.7

about four times as many of the young women under twenty were married as in the seventh zone, where the higher occupational classes were located. The intervening zones showed variations that accorded with the general culture of these areas.<sup>2</sup>

By relating the statistics on the family life of the Negro to the economic and cultural organization of the Negro community, they reflected the marked differences in the char-

<sup>1</sup> See Table XII.

<sup>2</sup> The large proportion of women under twenty married in the sixth zone was due to the census tracts in the western part of the zone along the railroad tracks, where the poorer families were living.

acter of the family in different levels of the population. They became indexes to the processes of selection and segregation in the community, which defined the areas of disorganization and reorganization of family life. Home ownership was seen to be an index to the progressive stabilization of family life and coincided with the tendency of the more stable elements in the population to move out from the mass. The increase in home ownership was accompanied by a decrease in the proportion of males in the population and an increase in the proportion of this group who had become heads of families. Variations in the character and the size of the family group conformed to the general culture of the different zones of the community. The families within the areas occupied chiefly by southern migrants, while large, showed the effects of migration and living in the city. The more stable family life in the areas of higher culture was reflected in the slightly larger number of children on the average to the family than even in the poorer migrant group at the other end of the community. Within the disorganized area near the center of the community, family life tended to disappear altogether. Differences in the culture of these areas were also registered in the larger proportion of women married under twenty in the sections inhabited chiefly by the migrants. The large number of families with female heads in these same sections as compared with those in the areas of the higher occupational classes pointed to the problem of broken homes so widespread in the Negro population. Many of these homes were broken through the desertion of the male head. In the next chapter we shall consider the problem of desertion more closely in relation to the cultural organization of the Negro community.



## CHAPTER VIII

### DESERTION AND NON-SUPPORT

The disintegration of Negro family life in the city has come to the attention of private and public welfare agencies in the form of dependency, desertion, and non-support. Desertions are seemingly more frequent in Negro families than in the case of other racial groups when their relative numbers, in the population of the cities in which studies have been made, are used as a basis for comparison. For example, a study of deserters in New York City in 1916-17 showed that Negroes, who comprised 5.6 per cent of the families under the care of the Charity Organization Society for all causes, furnished 11.2 per cent of the desertions.<sup>1</sup> A similar situation was found in Cook County, Illinois, where, during the six years (exclusive of 1914) from 1909 to 1915, Negroes comprised 21.1 per cent of all the desertion cases aided by the county agent.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, in 1921, although Negroes constituted only 4.0 per cent of the entire population of Chicago, they provided 15.6 per cent of the cases of desertion before the Court of Domestic Relations.<sup>3</sup> The relatively large numbers of desertions that were handled by these two agencies in Chicago seemed to indicate that this

<sup>1</sup> Joanna C. Colcord, *Broken Homes: A Study of Family Desertions* (New York, 1919), pp. 44-45. The Italians, who comprised 28.0 per cent of all cases, contributed 20.8 per cent of the desertions.

<sup>2</sup> Earle Edward Eubank, *A Study of Family Desertion* (Chicago, 1916), pp. 15-16. The Italians, who furnished 7.0 per cent of the desertion cases and ranked fourth for the total cases for all causes, ranked twenty-first for the percentage of desertion cases.

<sup>3</sup> Ernest Mowrer, *Family Disorganization* (Chicago, 1927), p. 94.

form of family disintegration has been widespread in the Negro population.

In 1927, the number of Negro cases of desertion or non-support that came before the Court of Domestic Relations in Chicago was almost twice that of 1921, and the percentage of Negro cases had increased to 19.5 per cent of the total.<sup>1</sup> Many of the Negro families that sought relief in the Court of Domestic Relations had been referred there for legal redress by the United Charities, just as many of the families that carried their complaints to the court were compelled to seek assistance from the United Charities.<sup>2</sup> The number of Negro cases handled by this organization has been far in excess of the relative number of Negroes in the total population. From 1921 to 1923, over a tenth of the major service cases of the United Charities were Ne-

<sup>1</sup> Statistics on non-support among Negroes were secured from the Court of Domestic Relations branch of the Municipal Court of Chicago. The published annual reports which give the number of warrants issued for non-support do not give the racial identity of the parties. Therefore, it was necessary to examine the complaint sheets in order to obtain the Negro cases. In the records for 1927 there were 813 cases in which warrants for non-support were issued for Negro men. In four cases complaints were made by white women. According to the annual report for 1927, there was a total of 4,168 warrants issued for non-support or desertion in the city of Chicago (*Nineteenth, Twentieth, Twenty-first, and Twenty-second Annual Reports of the Municipal Court of Chicago*, December 1, 1924—December 2, 1928, inclusive, p. 107).

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this study the records of the United Charities have been examined for statistics on charity cases and family desertion. Since family desertions were not classified according to race either in the published annual reports or the statistical records of the United Charities, information on Negro cases was secured from the index cards to records in the district offices. All the Negro families applying to the United Charities in 1927 furnished the statistics for the charity cases, while the statistics on Negro family desertion were taken from the records for two and a half years, from January 1, 1926, to June 30, 1928, inclusive.

groes.<sup>1</sup> In 1924 the proportion of Negro cases doubled, and since then has continued to amount to about one-fifth of the total.<sup>2</sup> Something less than a half of the Negro cases han-

TABLE XVI

TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES AND TOTAL NUMBER OF NEGRO FAMILIES  
RECEIVING MAJOR SERVICES FROM THE UNITED CHARITIES,  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 1921-28

Year*	1921-22	1922-23	1923-24	1924-25	1925-26	1927	1928
Total.....	5,416	3,507	4,092	4,202	3,917	3,471	2,595
Colored.....	645	383	791	935	739	736	537
Percentage colored....	11.6	10.9	19.3	22.0	18.8	20.9	20.7

\* For the years 1921-26 the fiscal year began October 1. Beginning with 1927 the fiscal year corresponded with the calendar year.

dled by this agency were reported as deserted families. For the two and a half years period, beginning January 1, 1926,

<sup>1</sup> Major service cases are defined according to the decision of a special committee of the American Association of Family Social Work. "They are technically known as under care cases (major service) and not under care cases (minor service)" ("Sixty-six Years of Service. An Account of the Activities of the United Charities of Chicago," *Reports of Social Work Done and Financial Statement for the Period October 1, 1919, to October 1, 1922*, p. 12 n).

<sup>2</sup> Although the sudden increase, which Table XVI shows, in proportion of Negro cases among the major service cases, occurred during the decade, 1920-30, when the Negro population in Chicago more than doubled itself, it appears from the reports of the Chicago Urban League that this increase beginning with 1924 coincided with a marked increase in unemployment among Negroes. Although there was a sudden decrease in the total number of major service cases in 1928, the total number of major and minor service cases was practically the same in 1928 as in 1927. A more rigorous definition of major service cases was responsible for the decrease in the number of cases under this classification. The definition of a major case adopted late in 1927 was as follows: "A major case is a case for which the society (after careful consideration) assumes the responsibility for making diagnosis and for carrying out a plan of complete and continued treatment" (from the Records of the United Charities).

there were 750 cases of family desertions.<sup>1</sup> When the cases of non-support, charity, and family desertion were distributed in the seven zones of the South Side Negro community, they tended to be concentrated in certain areas. More important still, the rates of family disorganization, as indicated by these cases, varied considerably. The disorganization of Negro family life was found to be related, as was shown in the last chapter in the case of the census data on the family, to the social structure and cultural organization of the Negro community.<sup>2</sup>

Since 1920, industry and business had gradually encroached upon the first zone near the Loop, forcing many Negro families to move farther south, and was making in-

<sup>1</sup> This included both major and minor service cases. It is quite possible that in many cases of desertions the couple was not married. Social agencies dealing with Negro families experience great difficulty in the case of migrant families in verifying their marriage. For example, during January, 1927, there were case records in the Central District of the United Charities for 248 Negro cases, of which 129 were major service and 119 minor service cases. The social state of these 248 cases was as follows:

Married couples.....	112	Separated.....	17
Widows.....	52	Unmarried couples.....	5
Widowers.....	5	Unmarried mothers.....	1
Deserted.....	47	Children.....	4
Divorced.....	4	Unknown.....	1

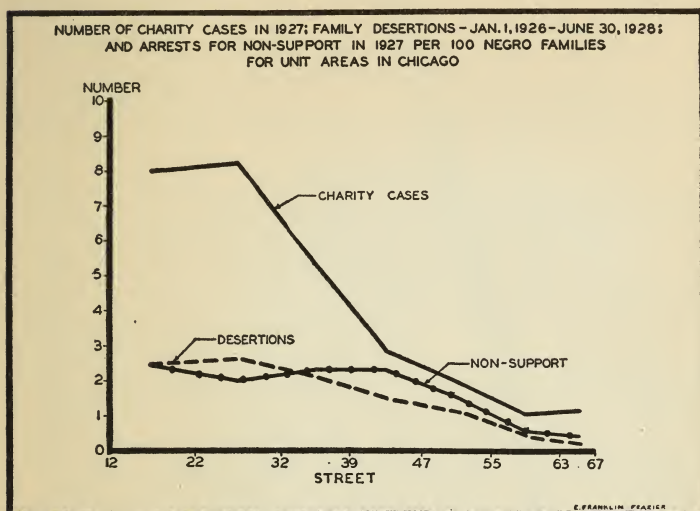
The verification of marriages in these cases was as follows: marriage was verified in 70 cases; an unsuccessful attempt was made to verify 55 cases; marriage was unverified in 122 cases; and one was classified unknown.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Marion Lindner, of the Local Community Research Laboratory of the University of Chicago, calculated the entire population in the census tracts for 1928 on the basis of the city directory. The changes in the number of Negro children in the schools in the areas were taken by the writer as the basis for estimating the changes in the Negro population in the seven zones. There is a margin of error in these estimates which, naturally, could not be avoided, because the ratio of children attending schools to the total population varied in the census tracts.



roads into the second zone.<sup>1</sup> Along Wabash Avenue the extreme deterioration of parts of the second area was marked

CHART X



by dilapidated houses carrying signs of rooms for rent at fifteen and twenty cents a bed, and vacant houses plastered

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Burgess has defined the stages in the decline of a neighborhood as follows: "In the decline of a neighborhood the following stages of deterioration have been worked out: first, the stage of residential home ownership, with a high degree of community spirit; second, the stage tenancy, with a decline of neighborhood loyalty; third, the invasion of business; fourth, the rooming house stage; fifth, the entrance of a racial or nationality group of imputed inferior cultural status; sixth, the intrusion of vice and crime; seventh, the stage where business or industry takes full possession of the area. This is the general cycle of the life history of the neighborhood. There are, of course, variations in this pattern, as when a residential area of single houses is transformed into an apartment house or residential hotel area" (Ernest W. Burgess, "The Natural Area as the Unit for Social Work in the Large City," *Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work*, 1926, p. 509).

with posters; while motor-truck salesrooms and industries here and there among the abandoned buildings indicated the changing character of this area. Along State Street the deterioration was more striking. Industry had sprung up here and there, giving a promise of order and rebirth, but the decadence of this area was depicted in the Negro billiard and shoe-shining "parlors," cook shops, junk shops, decay-

TABLE XVII

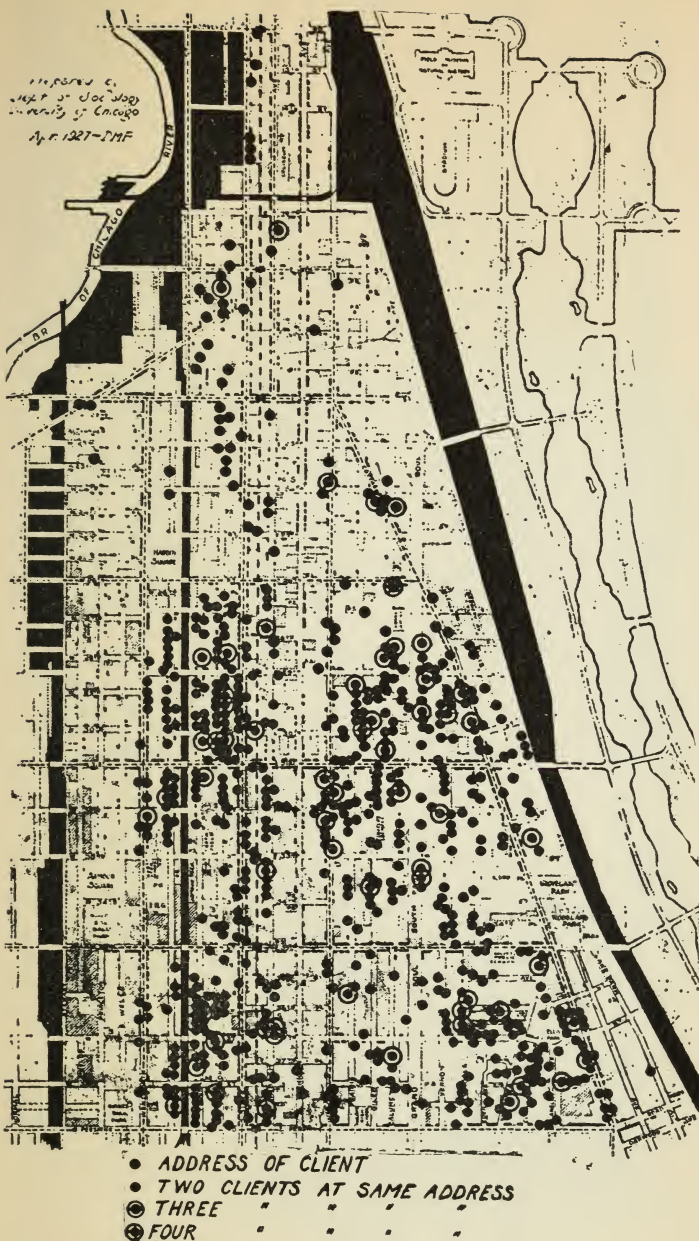
NUMBER OF CASES AND RATES OF NON-SUPPORT, CHARITY, AND FAMILY  
DESERTIONS IN THE SEVEN ZONES OF THE SOUTH SIDE  
NEGRO COMMUNITY, CHICAGO

	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III	Zone IV	Zone V	Zone VI	Zone VII
Warrants for non-support: 1927	9	79	166	199	125	15	10
Rate.....	2.5	2.0	2.3	2.3	1.5	0.5	0.4
Charity cases for all causes:							
1927.....	28	317	389	242	154	30	21
Rate.....	8.0	8.2	5.3	2.8	1.9	1.0	1.1
Family desertion: January 1, 1926—June 30, 1928.....	9	100	154	132	88	11	5
Rate.....	2.5	2.6	2.1	1.5	1.1	0.4	0.2

ing vacant buildings, cheap Jewish clothing stores, markets with stale meat, and crowded Negro homes with dirty bedding and furniture scarcely visible through sooty windows.

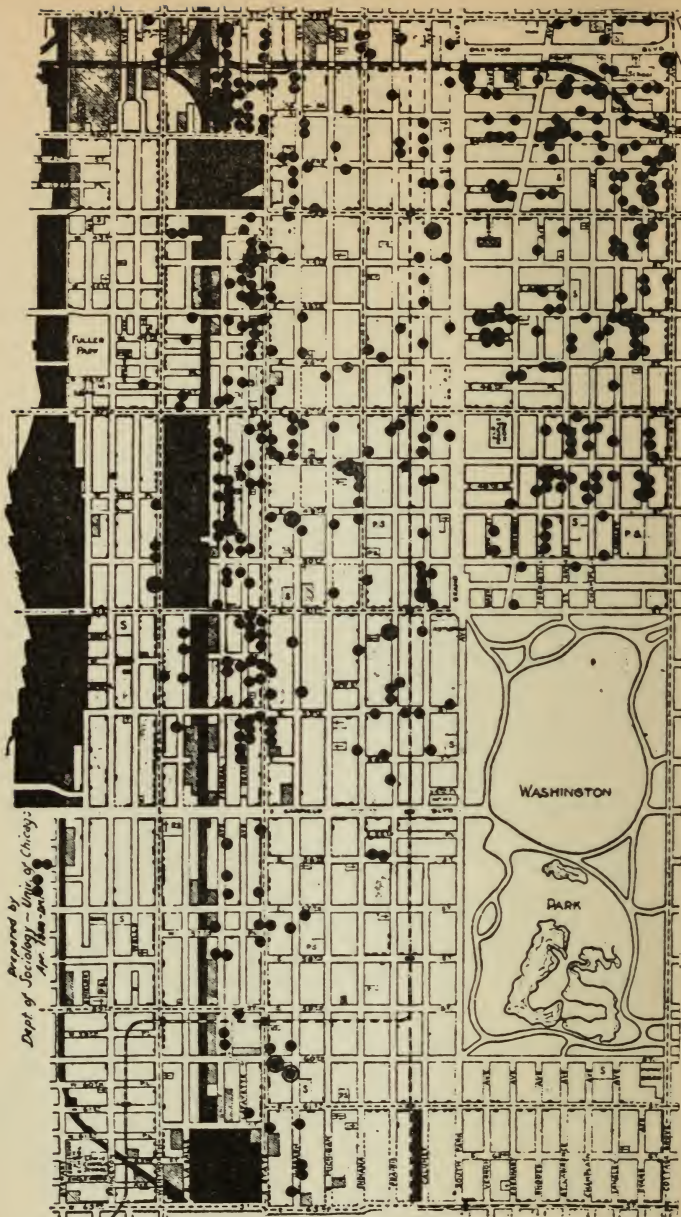
About 8 per cent of the families in the first two zones came to the charities for aid, and of those who came a third complained of desertion. Even the story told in the brief record of the social worker's initial contact with one of these families gave some indication of the breakdown of family life and the disorganization of the community in this area occupied chiefly by migrant families.

# MAP IV



SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, 12TH STREET TO 39TH STREET  
 Distribution of 743 Negro cases handled by the United Charities, 1927



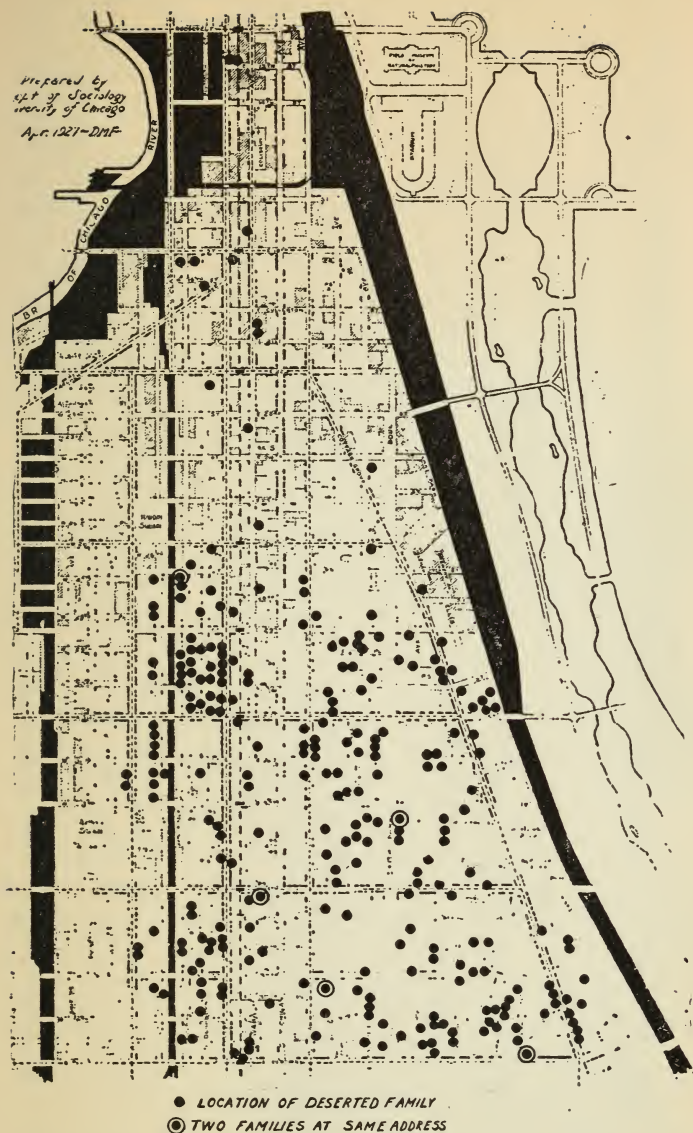


- ADDRESS OF CLIENT
- ⊙ TWO CLIENTS AT SAME ADDRESS
- ⊕ THREE

SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, 39TH STREET TO 63RD STREET  
Distribution of 437 Negro cases handled by the United Charities, 1927

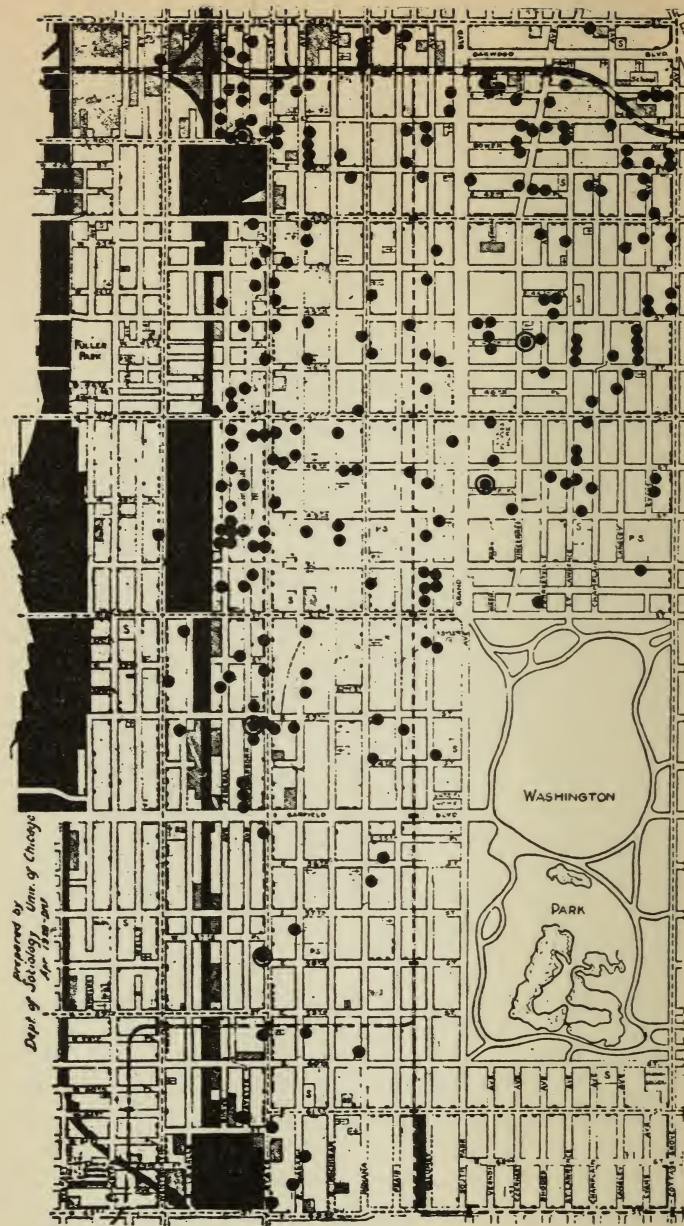


# MAP VI



## SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, 12TH STREET TO 39TH STREET

Distribution of 266 cases of family desertion among Negroes; January 1, 1926—June 30, 1928.



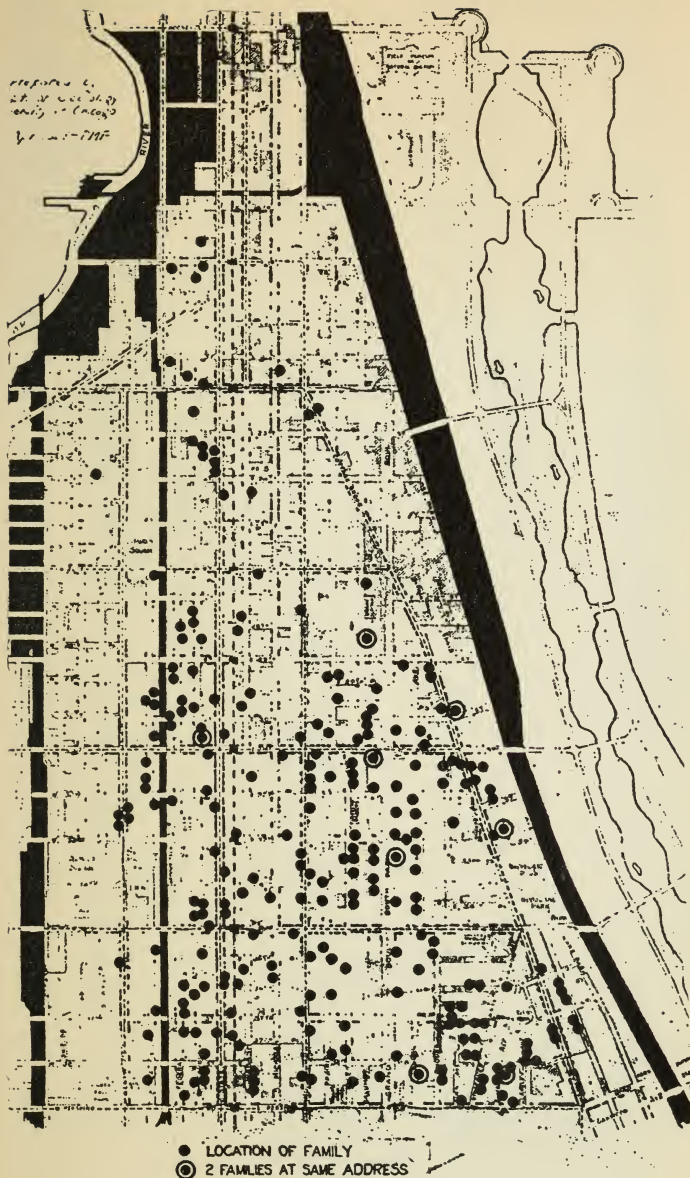
● LOCATION OF DESERTED FAMILY

◎ TWO FAMILIES AT SAME ADDRESS

SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, 39TH STREET TO 63RD STREET

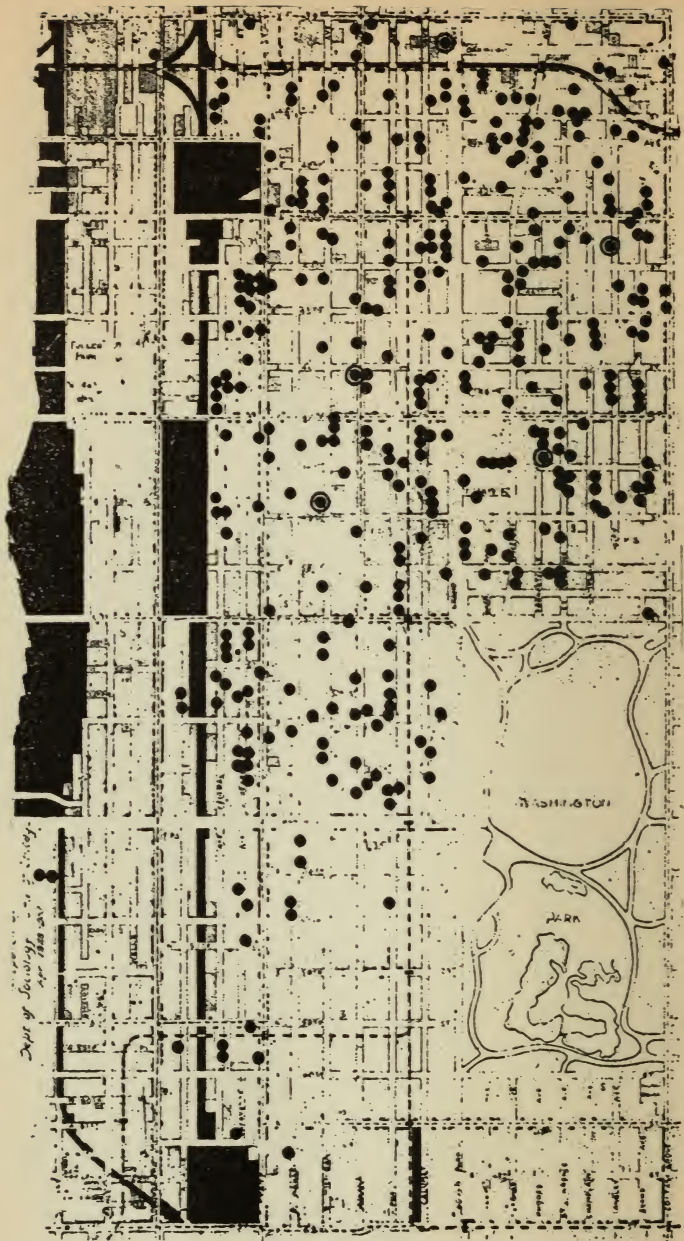
Distribution of 236 cases of family desertion among Negroes, January 1, 1926—June 30, 1928.

# MAP VIII



SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, 12TH STREET TO 39TH STREET  
 Distribution of 255 cases for arrests for non-support, 1927





• LOCATION OF FAMILY

○ 2 FAMILIES AT SAME ADDRESS

SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, 39TH STREET TO 63RD STREET

Distribution of 357 cases of arrests for non-support, 1927



Mrs. G. in office asking assistance because Mr. G. had deserted her in June. Mrs. G. was born in Port Gibson, Mississippi, and moved to Missouri in 1924. She went to school in Mississippi to the 8th grade. She met her husband in St. Louis and knew him 10 months before marriage. They came to Chicago directly after marriage. Her husband was a good provider, but abused her, beating her and quarrelling continually. He is big headed. This caused the separation. He does not drink, but is very hard to get on with, as he is continually fighting. She thinks he has gone off with O—— W——, a woman who lived next door. She does not know how long he has been friendly with her. He left her in June but stayed at 29—— Cottage Grove Avenue until the first of August, when she last saw him. She does not know where he is now. She went to C. D. R. in August, swearing out a warrant for him but the officers were unable to find him.<sup>1</sup>

In the case of another family, in this area, that had been deserted by the mother, the officer's meager report gave only a slight indication of the problems of dependency, delinquency, and irregular school attendance that were involved in this broken home.

Called at 29—— Wentworth Avenue, first floor, and found 6 of the B—— children at home, family have 3 rooms, rent \$16.00 per month, rooms poorly furnished but clean and in order, there are 2 stoves to

<sup>1</sup> From a Case Record, Central District, United Charities. Mowrer has shown the deficiencies of social case records, found in social agencies, for the analysis of family disorganization. He writes: "The sort of facts which the social worker selects reveals the lack of any comprehensive attack upon the problem. A great deal of attention is given to elaborating the description of the financial situation from every angle possible: physical examinations; opinions as to what were the motives; impressions of social workers regarding the personality of the wife; history of interviews and telephone calls; accounts of previous desertions, if any; and perhaps, in some cases, brief statements of the domestic difficulties of the parents. Little or no attention is given to the personal and cultural background of the family, to the genesis of the attitudes which receive superficial expression in the external behavior of the individuals" (Ernest R. Mowrer, *Family Disorganization* [Chicago, 1927], p. 187). In addition to examining the case records of the social agencies, the author has made an independent collection of family histories and other materials on the Negro families and the social life in these seven zones.

heat the rooms. L——, age 11 years, said their Mother left home 5 weeks ago and they do not know where she is living, that their Father works steady, is good to them and they get enough food to eat, the children were poorly but properly dressed and appear to be in good health. B——, age 15 years, was arrested for stealing 2 weeks ago and is in the Juvenile Home, M——, age 14 years, is in the sub-normal room at the Ward School, 27th and Shields Avenue. L——, H——, and V——, are of school age, but have not attended school for the last three weeks on account of not having proper clothing. Children all in need of shoes and clothing for the cold weather. The children seem to be well mannered and look to be in good health, they are left alone all day, suggest Juvenile Authorities be called on this case.<sup>1</sup>

A more intimate picture of the type of deserted families in this area was furnished in the history of the life of a woman who had been in Chicago about five years. She knew nothing of the family background of her father who died about twenty-five years before in Alabama, and of her mother's family she was acquainted only with an old grandmother. Her father owned a small farm of eight acres in Alabama where he reared seven children. This family was evidently once integrated into the life and institutions of the rural Negro community in Alabama. She said:

We was a happy family. You know in them days the men took care of their families. But times are different now than in them days.

<sup>1</sup> From Complaint Sheet Records, Court of Domestic Relations. Social case records of the type used by the social agencies were not kept by the social service department of the Court of Domestic Relations. The blanks on which complaints for warrants were made had spaces to be filled in concerning the age, race, occupation, children, and habits of the man and his wife. Not enough of this information was given to treat it statistically. Social data on the non-support and desertion cases could only be obtained from reports made for the Social Service Bureau of the Court of Domestic Relations by the officers of the Illinois Humane Society. The Juvenile Court and United Charities had, of course, case records for the non-support cases in which they were interested. The author secured additional information on these cases by having stenographic reports made of the statements given him by the complainants during supplementary interviews.

People was good in them days. I went to Sunday School every Sunday. My whole family went to church. My mother had a corner where she sat in church and so did my father.<sup>1</sup>

When this woman was "about nineteen" she married a man from Georgia who worked in a nearby sawmill. He took her to St. Louis, when his brother who had already gone there wrote for him, and secured a job in the packing house. In this city he began his periodic desertions. She continued her story:

You know, it seems like a man don't want a good woman any more. Mine got to the place where he wouldn't do nothing. He would go away and come back. He just got that way when he came to St. Louis. I had not saw him for about seven or eight months at a time. He did not support his family. He didn't gamble, nor drink, just liked women. He just seemed to want a heap of women.<sup>2</sup>

After coming to Chicago she received her main support from her son who was an elevator operator. Her sixteen-year-old daughter had recently married a laborer. In the strange world of the city this little black peasant woman no longer found a congenial place in the Methodist church as she had done in Alabama, but had become a member of the Sanctified church, one of the "store-front" churches in this area. The minister of the church was, as she said, "a little bit of dark woman" who "don't care 'bout no denomination. She says she is just called to preach the word of God."<sup>3</sup>

The story told by the man who had deserted his wife because, as he said, "We just couldn't get along; I didn't want to fight and beat her, so I walked off from her," showed how in the disorganization of the community in this area the individual, freed from all forms of social control, gave rein to his impulses. This man had wandered about from city to city in the South, and during his residence in

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Chicago, which had been interrupted by occasional trips to other cities, he had moved about often in this area. He said that their child, who was in Atlanta, was about eighteen, although they had married in 1917 in Chattanooga. In Chicago he lived alone, had no "particular friends," and had never been a member of a church. He did barbering when there was not an opportunity to work at his trade as a plasterer. According to his story he became discouraged when his wife "got to drinking moonshine," and the conflict between him and his wife began when he came home unexpectedly and discovered his wife with "a man sitting on her bed and talking to her." He continued:

That was the first time. They had told me to watch her and I did and I caught her. Her sister isn't married, but she has a "friend." She runs this boarding house on 18th Street. This "friend" is a gambler. She and her mother are running this house together now. Her mother used to have a place too. They are nothing but bootleggers. Girls just come in and go out all day long. One time when I was there I saw my wife come in there to meet a friend and she saw me in there. There are about sixteen rooms.<sup>1</sup>

His expressed attitude toward divorcing his wife was:

I don't want no divorce, 'cause I ain't going to marry anybody. She can do like she do when she goes up to that place. So she might as well not marry again.<sup>2</sup>

While there was a considerable decline in the percentage of families applying to the charities for assistance and a somewhat smaller rate of family desertion in the third zone, the proportion of families seeking redress in the Court of Domestic Relations remained about the same. The following summary of the main facts, over a period of several years, in the social case record of one of these deserted families revealed a record of crime and irregular sex be-

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



havior and indicated something of the general disorganization of this area which has been described in the previous chapter.

This case was referred to the United Charities October 1, 1924, by the Court of Domestic Relations. The husband, 41 years, and wife, 27 years, were both born in Alabama. Their marriage in Montgomery in 1916 was verified. There was a boy born in Montgomery and three girls and a boy were born in Chicago. The husband was arrested and committed to jail for 30 days besides being fined \$25 for receiving stolen goods. The case was closed after the man got out of jail and went to work.

The wife was in the office in February, 1926, when the husband was injured. After he received small sums for compensation, a settlement for \$200 was made. The wife was in the office in 1928 and stated that the husband left home in October "because they could not get along together. He would come home often and leave money. His mother was living with them. A month ago he took his mother out of the home and they have not been seen since, although the wife thinks they are in the city." The husband had no regular job when he left home, but drove a junk wagon and used most of his money for drink. "He used to hang out at 36—— Wabash, where a friend of his by the name of I—— ran a "joint" which has been closed." The wife was advised to take out a warrant for her husband. A letter of inquiry concerning her husband's police record showed the following: July, 1921, receiving stolen property, discharged; July, 1923, assault to kill, discharged on parole; September, 1924, receiving stolen property, 30 days in House of Correction and \$25 and costs. The wife went to the Court of Domestic Relations and secured an order for her husband to pay \$10.00 per week but he left the city. The wife's mother had sent her \$50 but was unable to send more because of the death of her husband. A visit to the mother of the husband later was the basis of the statement in the record that the presence of roomers to whom the wife gave more attention than to the husband had caused the latter to leave after a quarrel with his wife in which a roomer interfered. "After Mr. W. and his mother left the W. home E—— W—— a roomer rented a flat on Wabash Avenue for the family. Mother-in-law knew daughter-in-law from childhood as they came from the same place." The wife's sister

thought that the trouble was due to the husband's drink habits. "He never drank to excess in the South, but has gone wild over bad whiskey since coming to Chicago."<sup>1</sup>

In this area where the Negroes were better acquainted with city life, less illiterate, and on a somewhat higher economic level, they were more likely to carry their domestic difficulties to the court. This was shown by the fact that, although the desertion rate declined so far as the charity cases were concerned, it was relatively high when measured by the court cases. The report of the officer's routine visit to one of these families indicated the use of the divorce court by the husband as well as the Court of Domestic Relations by his mother against her daughter-in-law. The mode of living and the behavior of the mother of the children were characteristic of this disorganized area.

Called at 38— S. Wabash Avenue, and found complainant and her three grandchildren in. Her husband is pastor of the M— Baptist Church and the family lives in the church building. Mrs. M— said her son married respondent about 12 years ago, had 3 children with her, couple separated and her son divorced respondent and is married again and she does not know where he is, said he is a preacher and travels, and she thinks he is in Alabama somewhere. He sends no money for the support of the children. He was given custody of the children by the court. The respondent had the 3 children with her in Birmingham, Alabama, but with the mother's permission the children have been kept with grandparents. G—, 10 years, with grandparents about 4 years, J— and S— about 2 years. "Mrs. M— wants the children's mother to come and live with her and help with the children, and about a month ago she sent the fare to respondent to come to Chicago. Respondent came, stayed with her in-laws, and

<sup>1</sup> Based on Case Record, Central District, United Charities. In connection with the reference to the roomers as the cause of family conflict, one should recall the fact brought out in the last chapter concerning the large number of families in this area with lodgers and the general absence of normal family groups.

Mrs. M—— got her a job. Respondent kept late hours and came home drunk a couple of times. She was told to stop drinking and not to come home drunk, and resented this and left home about 10 days ago. Mrs. M—— said respondent is a good woman and she wants her to come back, said she will not charge her any money for room and board. She has a clean, well-furnished home, the children were clean, properly dressed, they attend school.

Called at 37—— Indiana Avenue, 1st floor, rear, and found respondent, Mrs. S—— M——, in. She rooms here with a Mrs. H——, pays \$5 per week room rent. She said she left her husband 4 years ago on account of abuse. She admits her mother-in-law has had the children for some years, admits she is well treated by them, and promised to go back and live with the children and their grandparents.

Called back and told Mrs. M——, complainant, of the talk I had with her daughter-in-law and she wants the case dropped. If she can locate her son, the father of the children, she will try to have him contribute to the children's support.

Drop for the present.<sup>1</sup>

From these case records one was only able to get a description of the overt behavior of Negroes in the urban environment. Concerning their inner lives, their attitudes, wishes, and conceptions of life, one had to rely on the sporadic inferences of social workers and officers of the court. How had the transplantation from the southern countryside and town to the northern metropolis affected their ways of thinking and the meaning of life for them? Not irrelevant to an understanding of the breakdown of customary modes of thought was the statement of a roving laborer, who had deserted his family, concerning his religious ideas. "I thought once I wanted to be sanctified, but I have seen so many kinds of religion I don't know what I want. I believe in a supreme being all right, but I was at church last night and I couldn't see no cause for going."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From Complaint Sheet Records, Court of Domestic Relations.

<sup>2</sup> Manuscript document.

When the Negro peasant is freed from the simple routine life in the rural southern community, where his behavior is controlled more or less by the church and the lodge and his ideas of right and wrong are defined by the customs of the community, and comes into contact with conflicting standards and varying forms of behavior in the city, he begins to reflect upon his conduct. Sometimes this leads to the rationalization of his behavior in the city which is out of harmony with traditional ideas of right and wrong. Such was the case with a woman in the third area who had been deserted by her husband. She was born in Texas and brought to Chicago by her mother who also had been deserted. She was fifteen when her mother died. After the death of her mother she continued her connection with the church where she was a member of the choir. She married a widower who had had the reputation of providing for his former wife, so that she was not compelled to work. Although her husband, a dining car waiter, proved to be a good provider, he did not "find one woman enough for him." He began to remain away from home for weeks at a time until he finally disappeared somewhere in the city. Then she was forced to seek her own livelihood. A men's hotel, in which she found employment in this area, was described by her as follows:

I went there to work because I had been out of work and was willing to try it. There are 160 rooms, and just two maids. This maid that has been there, she is a tall light woman. She is a sport. She will go in some room and try to make you do all the work, and she would stay in the room with those men until she got ready to come out. She would drink with them and do anything else. When I come there they asked me if I drank. I told them No. I said if I did, I would not drink around there with those dirty men. They didn't bother me much. So over there in that hotel girls from 15, 16, and 18 come up there with those men and lay around with them. I told the boss it was terrible.



And the language they use is something terrible. I told the clerk one day that that woman's mouth ought to be paralyzed. They gamble back there in room 14. I told him that they gamble in 14. He said to let him know the next time they got together, but I said I would not do that, I might get hurt. The janitor that they have there, he is a gambler—gambled all his life. He gambles for a living. They have got all kinds of insects over there. I went in the room one morning and I pulled the light on and there was an old drunken man under the bed and I could just see his feet sticking out. I flew out of there. They said he had come in about two o'clock that morning and that he was drunk.<sup>1</sup>

She left this place because it demanded association with people and places that were opposed to her way of life. Later, she found work in another place which she was forced to leave for the same reason.

I went down to another place to work down on W— Street. They all were old men with money (white hotel). A colored woman was there—she hustles. The Jew said to me, "Say, girlie, you are just the type of girl who would take." He said, haven't you any fellows who asked you for a good time. I told him I only came there to work. He said this other woman she makes good money. I stayed there until my week was out.<sup>2</sup>

Gradually she lost contact with her church because she was unable to dress as the other members and pay the dues. She said, "I met my pastor on the street two or three weeks ago and he told me I must come to church even if I didn't have money to put in. But I don't like to go unless I do."

When she found herself alone in the city, she attempted to satisfy her "wish for response" by getting a "beau."<sup>3</sup> She

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> "The desire for response," according to Thomas, "is a craving, not for the recognition of the public at large, but for the intimate appreciation of individuals. It is exemplified in mother-love (touch plays an important rôle in this connection), in romantic love, family affection, and other personal

said: "You have to make a fuss over me. I am affectionate." She took up with him because, she said, "he was a clean upright gentleman and knows how to treat a lady. Otherwise, I would not have anything to do with him." This association led gradually to unconventional sex relations which she attempted to conceal from those in whose opinion she still wanted to be regarded as respectable. But to herself she attempted to rationalize and justify her behavior. She was unable to secure a divorce. To sell herself for money was "low." She was not "raised that way." "I was raised an honest girl," she said. But to have sex relations with a "decent" man whom you loved was different. She was not sure whether it was right or wrong. She rationalized: "There's an old saying 'Two clean sheets cannot dirty each other up.' If two people feel disposed—everybody has a right to their opinion."<sup>1</sup>

The case of another woman in this area, who was deserted by her husband, showed how in the anonymous life of the city, where the neighborhood organization breaks down, the individual is emancipated from the control of the community. The social bonds which the migrant establishes are often with strangers whom he meets through the casual and secondary contacts of urban life. This woman was one of five children by her mother's second husband. Her family

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attachments. Homesickness and loneliness are expressions of it" (a restatement from a paper by William I. Thomas, "The Persistence of Primary-Group Norms in Present-Day Society," in Jennings, Watson, Meyer, and Thomas, "Suggestions of Modern Science concerning Education," in *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, by Park and Burgess [Chicago, 1924], p. 490).

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document. It is noteworthy that the rationalization of the "clean sheets" became the subject of theological controversy among Negroes in their churches in Missouri after the Civil War.

lived in their own home in a small town in Mississippi. Concerning the life of the family, she said:

We had three meals a day and we gathered around the table and the blessing was said and my father each Sunday morning had a prayer and he would read the Bible to us every Sunday morning. Afterwards he would sing a hymn. He was a preacher, you see. We would all get ready and then go to Sunday School and when we got back my mother she would go to her church.<sup>1</sup>

Her only brother left school to help his father who was a carpenter and painter. After his death the brother left home and became lost from his sisters. The sisters joined the northward migration during the war. One sister, who went to St. Louis, married and, after becoming the mother of three children, died there. This woman followed her sister to St. Louis and after a while gave up her ambition to complete school in spite of the urging of an aunt. Later she came to live with a sister in Chicago where all three sisters were now living. Unlike her sister who had had "a church wedding, because she married one of the boys 'round home," she married in her sister's house in Chicago a man whom she met while working in a lunch room on Forty-third Street.

I was applying and looking for a job and so he said—well you know how men are. He said I didn't need to work, that he was looking for a wife. He told me all about his history, and so I gave him my telephone number, but I wouldn't give him my address. You know my sister always told me not to make up to strangers. He kept calling me up to let him come and see me. So finally he started to come to see me. He would come and bring presents and nice things. Then I asked my sister about him and she told me to suit myself. So my brother-in-law said he would do well because he was a Mason. Finally he asked me to marry him. Well, I didn't know about that. I always kept my home training, you know. My mother said always to ask some one of us

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

who we lived with. So, of course, I asked my sister and she told me to suit myself, so I went on and married him. We left that night for Iowa.<sup>1</sup>

Membership in the Masonic lodge in Chicago was not the same as in the small rural community in the South. After her marriage her husband began to desert periodically. His peculiar behavior at home led to an investigation that indicated that he was married to two women.

I was doing well before I married. I even had a little money saved up. But now I can't find anything to do. My husband slept with a knife under his head. I wish I had of known all this but you never know. I thought I would get somebody like my mother's husbands. They stayed with her until they died. My husband was no church member. He was an infidel. I found out from his landlady who told me to call up a certain number and I did, and the lady who answered the phone answered by the same name as I had and her husband was the same as mine. So when my husband came over to our house, my sister asked him if he didn't have another wife besides me, but he said no. But I don't know. Lord knows how many he has, maybe one in every city.<sup>2</sup>

The dissolution of the social life of the migrant Negro sometimes began before he arrived in Chicago. There was the deserted mother, who had had "lots of children," from Mississippi. She worked on the farm with her mother, but, after going to work in a nearby town, "took a notion to travel a little while." She enumerated some of the places she had lived. "I lived in Clarksdale and Vicksburg, Mississippi; Monroe, Louisiana; Yazoo City, Mississippi; and Memphis, Tenn. I just wanted to travel. I didn't have any education. I came to Chicago for \$3.00."<sup>3</sup>

A laborer who had deserted his family for two years ap-

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



plied to the Court of Domestic Relations for assistance in restoring his authority in his home. An excerpt from the story of his early life indicated how complete parental authority had been in the rural community before he began his wanderings.

I was born in Jones County, Mississippi, in 1882. When I come to the knowledge of my folks conducting efforts for their support, they was farming. They saw fit to come established in that district and I farmed. I only went to school long enough to learn to write my name and learn to add a little. My father left us, five of us, when I was eight years old. When I was nine, my mother put me in possession of a white lawyer on his farm to support the other children. I worked for this lawyer from nine years old and when I was twenty-one years old, I got consent from my mother that I was of age and my mother gave me consent to marry.<sup>1</sup>

He was married in 1904 to a woman near his home but found out five years later that he did not want her for a wife. When he left Mississippi to avoid a term in the penitentiary for a mortgage debt, he sent his wife to his mother. He worked in New Orleans, Vicksburg, and Jackson, Mississippi; St. Louis, Memphis, Galveston, and had lived in Chicago "off and on since 1916." Concerning his married life he said: "We have been separated off and on since we married in 1904."

A vivid and somewhat detailed account of the disorganization of one of these Negro families that have wandered about the country was contained in the testimony of a man and woman before the Court of Domestic Relations. The same absence of social control of sex behavior, which characterized the behavior of the parents, appeared in the case of their daughter who was an unmarried mother.

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

Q. What is the trouble Mrs. W.?—A. Well, I have two kids, one 4 and the other 13 and I wants him to help support the kids.

Q. When did you last receive some help from him?—A. I have not received any support since we separated in March of this year.

Q. Why did you separate?—A. Well, I left him because he wasn't treating me right. He just wouldn't treat me right and I took the kids and left him.

Q. Did you have any money?—A. No.

Q. Where did you go?—A. Well, I went with an old lady. We separated in Ohio in Toledo.

Q. How long have you been in Chicago?—A. Near 4 months. I come here in August or first of July. My daughter sent for me.

Q. How long have you and Mr. W. been married?—A. A long time.

Q. Do you have other grown children?—A. Yes, by my other husband.

Q. How many have you?—A. Two living by the other husband.

Q. How old are they?—A. One is 22 and the other near 25.

Q. Are they married?—A. The one is married, living here in Chicago, and the other lives in Toledo is not married.

Q. Where is the father of these children?—A. I don't know. We were separated.

Q. Where were you married to your first husband?—A. In Alabama.

Q. When were you married to him?—A. I don't know.

Q. Were you really married to him?—A. Yes.

Q. How long did you live with him?—A. About 7 or 8 years. He quit me for another woman.

Q. Was that in Alabama?—A. No, that was in Mississippi.

Q. What place was that in Mississippi?—A. I don't know the place, I can't think of it. You see I can't read and write.

Q. How long were you away from your first husband before you married this man?—A. About two or three years.

Q. Did you get a divorce?—A. No, he married and I didn't have to get one. He told me that he was married and that I could marry if I wanted to.

Q. Well, Mr. W. What have you got to say about this situation? Why did you and your wife separate?—A. Well, we had a roomer.

She told me she didn't want any lady roomers. She told me if we had to have roomers to get men. So I let her have roomers—two of them.

Q. How large was your home?—A. We had 6 rooms.

Q. Who lived there?—A. I, my wife, 2 kids, both of her daughters, (M—— and E——), and two roomers. E—— left, went off to house-keep with J——, and M——, after she left her husband, stayed there. One or the other of them was there.

Q. Are their children living there?—A. E——'s little girl died in Missouri.

Q. Were any of the daughter's children living there?—A. Yes, one child was born in '23.

Q. Did the two roomers occupy the same rooms?—A. No, they had separate rooms.

Q. How were the other members distributed for sleeping?—A. I and my wife stayed in one room. M—— and "Doll Baby" stayed in one room. W—— stayed in the next room and P—— stayed in the next room to the kitchen. When the men was there the girls wasn't there. But, this is my hand to God, I have been absolutely mistreated by her. She went to bed with P——. Then I begged her to stay at home but she just took the kids and went on there and stayed living with P——. That was after he had moved to another place.

Q. How long have you been married?—A. We have been married since the fall of 1911. And if all that I said isn't so, I would suffer my mouth to be cut off. We have been married about 18 years and I begged her to come back. She was staying over on 12th Street. I told her she didn't know what she was doing but she wouldn't hear.

Q. Mrs. W., where did you get the money to pay for your room?—A. I borrowed money from my daughter to get the room.

Q. Was the man up there?—A. He was up there one time when my husband came. But we didn't know P—— was there but my husband put all this on me.

Q. Did you go back to your husband?—A. Yes, but he told me I wasn't going to stay there with the gun drawed on me, and my daughter can witness that the officers took the gun away from him.

Q. When you came to Chicago, did your husband follow you here?—A. No.

Q. How did you get to Chicago?—A. I came on the train.

Q. Did you come first?—A. Yes. We separated in Toledo and I come off up here before he did. My daughter sent for me.

Q. Have you lived together since you have been in Chicago?—A. No.

Q. Do you want your wife to live with you, Mr. W.?—A. Yes, I have asked her but she won't. (Mrs. W. interrupts) I sent the little girl over to ask him for \$5 and he sent word back that he wasn't going to give me a damn penny, and the only way I could get any money he would take the kids. But the court in Toledo gave me these papers to carry any where I went and he couldn't do anything and couldn't take the kids but he should help support the kids. And all I want is for him to help support the kids and he is making plenty of money to help me. I don't care who else he keeps, any other woman or what not.

Q. Where were you born Mr. W.?—A. I was born in Georgetown, Miss.

Q. How did you get your education?—A. Well, I will tell you. Well, I didn't have so much education. You know, this woman told me when I married her that she had got her divorce. Well, her husband came in 1922 and he tried to get her to go back home and take care of the children and I told her she could go on and that if they have not a divorce I won't try to keep her from her husband. She didn't go. We left there and went to Missouri. We left there and came to Ohio and I sure did support her. I was making mortar.

Q. Are your other children married, Mrs. W.?—A. Yes, one of them is and she is in Toledo.

Q. What about the one that is here?—A. She had a child seven years old and is not married to the father, he is in Mississippi or somewhere.

Q. How much are you making, Mr. W.?—A. About 20 or 25 dollars.

Q. (To Mrs. W.) If he gives you \$5 a week toward taking care of the children, would this be satisfactory?—A. He should give me \$5 a piece. He lives with a woman and he should give more to take care of the children.

Q. Did you say one of the children stays with him?—A. No, she don't stay with him, she only stayed sometimes at night. (Mr. W. interrupts) Oh, she does stay with me.



*Q.* Well, I am going to have him give you \$5 a week to take care of the one living with you and then bring the other child in that stays with him. (To Mr. W.) Now, when you get paid you give her \$5 by Postal Money Order because I will want to see the stub.—*A.* I don't want to give it to her because she lives with that man and who will know whether the children get it or not. (Mrs. W. interrupts) My mamma and all of them can tell you that I is not living with no men's. He is just telling that to try to take my children from me.

*Q.* Now, Mr. W., if you are living with a woman, the baby can't live with you.—*A.* I ain't living with no woman.

*Q.* Well, I am going to continue this case.<sup>1</sup>

In the fourth zone, where there was a marked decline in both the charity rate and desertion rate as measured by the cases in the United Charities, the proportion of families applying to the Court of Domestic Relations was the same as in the third zone. Although this zone had by 1927 begun to take on many of the characteristics of the third zone, there was much less poverty and ignorance, and a larger proportion of the higher occupational classes in the population. Therefore, family disorganization in this area was more likely to be reflected in the court records. In the fifth zone the continued decrease in the charity and desertion rate as well as the significant drop in the desertion rate registered in the court cases reflected the stabilization of family life in this area. In this area the individual was not as free from group control as in the first four zones. There was, for example, a woman who came to the court to complain that her husband, a West Indian, to whom she had been married ten years had suddenly deserted her after giving her his pay check as usual. This couple was in good standing in one of the churches attended by the higher classes in the Negro group. The lodge to which her husband belonged was as-

<sup>1</sup> Stenographic record of case in Court of Domestic Relations.

sisting her in locating him and having him give an account of his behavior.

Likewise, let us take the case of the young couple, living in this area, who appeared in court because the wife's parents urged her to use legal measures to make her husband support her. Both husband and wife had a fair education. The husband had worked in a Negro business establishment in the South. Since he had been in Chicago he had held a clerical position in a branch of the municipal government. The loss of this position had forced him to allow his wife's parents to assist in the support of his wife and four children under seven. Although the wife had come into the court with a complaint against her husband, the family unity had not been broken so far as their attitudes toward each other were concerned. According to the wife, her action had been forced by her parents who were tired of helping to take care of the children. In the last two zones, desertion and non-support tended to disappear although about one out of a hundred families applied to the United Charities for assistance. The character of the Negro family in these two zones was seen in the last chapter to be a part of the general culture of these areas. Negroes in these areas represented not only the higher occupational classes in the Negro community but were well integrated into the institutional life of the community. In the seventh zone, especially, the few charity and desertion cases which occurred appeared in recent years, when families on a lower economic and cultural level drifted into this area. The advance of these families was marked especially by the appearance of a "store-front" church which many of the older settlers protested against.

An exceptional case of family desertion, which did not come to the attention of either the social agency or the

court, showed how, in order to escape the control exercised by tradition, social status, and public opinion of the community and the social class to which the man belonged, he was compelled to leave the Negro world entirely. The case in question was that of an educated young man, with a family background of some culture, who held a conspicuous position in a college fraternity and other institutions in the Negro community. He suddenly disappeared leaving his child and wife who was about to give birth to a second child. The community was shocked, and their friends as well as members of their class refused to believe that it was a case of desertion. A thorough investigation was undertaken to discover whether he had disappeared through foul play or accident. The investigation disclosed, however, that he had made considerable preparations to desert. At the same time it was discovered that not only at his place of employment had he "passed" for white but he had maintained numerous social contacts in the white group. Being able because of his light color to move about freely in two distinct social worlds, he was thus freed from the moral restraints of either and could escape at will from the one to the other. His relation to the Negro group was essentially that of the wanderer or stranger, who, as Teggart has pointed out, is not "confined in his action by custom, piety or precedents."<sup>1</sup>

The comparatively large number of Negro cases of dependency, desertion, and non-support, which have usually been regarded as an indication of the general breakdown of family life in the group, appeared in the case of Chicago to be related to the fundamental changes which were taking place in the cultural life of the Negro in the city. When

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Robert E. Park, "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," in *Personality and the Social Group*, p. 71.

these cases of family disorganization were related to the social structure and cultural organization of the Negro community, they showed widely divergent rates for different sections of the community and different strata of the population. These rates became, to some extent, a measure of the processes of disorganization and reorganization of Negro life in the urban environment. They were also an indication of the process of selection and segregation, by which the more stable and highly developed elements in the Negro population escape from the disorganized masses and maintain conventional standards of conjugal behavior. We shall now turn to the problem of illegitimacy in the Negro group, which has for many years been the subject of comment among students of Negro life.



## CHAPTER IX

### ILLEGITIMACY

A southern author wrote very solemnly in 1907 that, "with very many Negro women two facts may be safely assumed—viz., bastard origin of itself will in no way prejudice the social interests of the child, nor will disregard of social conventions prove in any way detrimental to the standing of the mother either with her own or with the white race."<sup>1</sup> Twenty-three years later this same author, basing his opinion on the high illegitimacy rate among Negroes in the District of Columbia, found no reason to modify his earlier opinion. "It is certainly an error," he said, "to ascribe to the Negro race as a whole, possibly even to its more privileged classes in the United States, the attitudes and the ideals of the white group here concerning illegitimacy."<sup>2</sup> The Negro's attitude toward illegitimacy, he thought, was due primarily to false ideals of racial equality which were responsible for the mulatto offspring, the District of Columbia being the center in which such ideals have been encouraged.

The Negroes in the District of Columbia are not especially distinguished from Negroes in other cities by their high rate of illegitimacy. A study of illegitimacy in Cincinnati showed that, while Negroes comprised only 5.4 per cent of the total population, they contributed 20 per cent of the illegitimacy in the city.<sup>3</sup> A similar situation was shown in the case of St.

<sup>1</sup> A. H. Shannon, *Racial Integrity and Other Features of the Negro Problem* (Nashville, 1907), p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *The Negro in Washington*, p. 103.

<sup>3</sup> Helen S. Trounstone, *Illegitimacy in Cincinnati*, "Studies from the Helen S. Trounstone Foundation," Vol. I, No. 6 (Cincinnati, 1919).

Louis where "more than one-fifth of the total number of illegitimate births occur among Negroes, although they comprise only one-sixteenth of the entire population and furnish apparently an even smaller proportion of the annual births."<sup>1</sup> In Philadelphia where the illegitimacy rate among Negroes declined during the years 1915-20 from 16.3 per cent to 12.6 per cent, Negroes continued to furnish from 30 to 40 per cent of all the illegitimate births.<sup>2</sup>

Chicago appeared similar to other cities in regard to a high illegitimacy rate in its Negro population. From 10 to 15 per cent of the Negro maternity cases in the Cook County Hospital for the six years, 1923-28, were unmarried mothers.<sup>3</sup> Nearly four-fifths of these unmarried mothers were born in the South and over a half of them had been in

<sup>1</sup> George B. Mangold and Lou R. Essex, *Illegitimate Births in St. Louis* (St. Louis, Mo., 1914), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Amey Eaton Watson, *Illegitimacy: Philadelphia's Problem and Development of Standards of Care* (Bryn Mawr, Pa., 1923), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this study the records of the social service department of the Cook County Hospital were examined. Statistics for the total number of maternity cases and the cases of illegitimate births were taken from the maternity day books. It was possible to get a complete record as far back as the year 1923. In Table VIII, Appendix B, the number of maternity cases and the number of unmarried mothers are given for each month over the six-year period from 1923 to 1928. According to the records, about 60 per cent of all the maternity cases and about 50 per cent of the illegitimate births were Negroes. While it was impossible to determine what percentage of the illegitimate births in the city was represented in the cases at the hospital, it was reasonable to assume that this group embraced a large percentage of all illegitimate births, since between 35 and 50 per cent of the Negro births in Chicago during this period took place at the Cook County Hospital. For example, in 1924, a little less than 45 per cent of Negro births in Chicago occurred in this hospital. An examination was also made of the pregnancy records of the branch of the Chicago Lying-In Hospital located at the Provident Hospital, but these records were too scanty for a systematic study, and many of the patients had gone to the County Hospital to give birth to their children.

Chicago less than five years.<sup>1</sup> It was not surprising that the majority of them had not completed the grammar school. Although over a half of them were under twenty years of age and some of them under fifteen, they ranged in age up to over forty. Similar to other groups of unmarried mothers, a large proportion of these women—50 per cent—were engaged in domestic service.<sup>2</sup> Although most of them indicated their affiliation with Protestant churches, this information did not give any insight into their religious life.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the unmarried mothers who entered the hospital claimed that they were married. This claim was often found to be false when the social worker attempted to verify their statement. While a large majority of them were single, there were among them married women who were having children outside of wedlock as well as others who were widowed and divorced or separated from their husbands. One woman was

<sup>1</sup> Three hundred records of cases of illegitimacy occurring during 1927 and the first two months of 1928 were selected for analysis. See Tables X and XI, Appendix B. A study of 500 cases of unmarried mothers in New York City showed that 35.3 per cent of them came from the South and about an equal proportion came from the West Indies. About three-fourths of the women born in the South had been in New York less than five years (Ruth Reed, *Negro Illegitimacy in New York City* [New York, 1926], p. 49).

<sup>2</sup> In the group studied by Dr. Reed the same situation was found, on the whole, in regard to their education and age distribution as in the Chicago group. A much larger percentage was found in domestic service than in Chicago. This was probably due to the fact that a smaller proportion of Negro women were in domestic service in Chicago. The Chicago group had a larger proportion in industrial occupations than the New York group.

<sup>3</sup> In 141 cases they were designated simply as Protestant, while there were 68 specifically recorded as Baptists, 13 as Methodists, and 8 as Catholics. Six were given as members of a number of denominations including the Seventh Day Adventists, Presbyterian, Episcopal, Community church, Latter Day Saints, and the Sanctified church. Information for 60 women was not given and in four cases they were not affiliated with any church.

living with her husband and two children when she became the mother of an illegitimate child. There was even greater uncertainty concerning the marital status of the fathers of their children.<sup>1</sup> In many cases these women had had only casual contacts with the men who had later disappeared.

Illegitimate motherhood was not a new experience for many of these women. Twelve per cent of them were having their second illegitimate child and a few of them their third.<sup>2</sup> There was, for example, a woman of twenty-four who was born in North Carolina and had lived about five years in Chicago with a relative of her foster father. She had given birth to a child in the South when she was fifteen. The father of this child gave her some financial assistance until the child died when it was two months old. She knew nothing

<sup>1</sup> A little over 10 per cent were classified as separated and deserted. Even the widowed in some cases had only heard of the death of their husbands. The same uncertain situation in regard to marital status was indicated in the case of the fathers of the illegitimate children. The information given in the case records was sufficient in some cases to substantiate the marital status recorded for the fathers on the face sheets of these records. This information was given in most cases by the unmarried mothers and amounted to mere hearsay in many cases. According to the records, 189 of the fathers were single, 48 married, 2 widowed, 1 divorced, and 1 separated. It is also worth while to note the fact that in 2 cases the fathers of the children were brothers-in-law of the unmarried mothers and in 1 case a step-father. In another case a girl accused her own father of the paternity of her children but later denied it. According to the records, 6 of the fathers were white and 1 was a Mexican. Among the white fathers there were 2 Jews and 2 Italians.

<sup>2</sup> Although the information given in the case records did not give specifically or systematically the number of illegitimate children that the unmarried mothers had given birth to, the available information showed that 36 of the mothers had two illegitimate children and 4 had three. In Dr. Reed's study 60 of the 500 mothers had had two children and 23 had three children. There were, in addition, mothers who had had up to seven children and 1 had had eight (Reed, *op. cit.*, p. 99). It is probable that the case records studied by Dr. Reed gave more information concerning this matter. See Table XIV, Appendix B.



of her second child's father, whom she met in Chicago, except that he was employed at a roundhouse. Since he refused to give her any assistance, she was forced to leave the child with a friend while she worked by the day in domestic service. That she showed, as many of these cases, syphilitic infection, was an expected consequence of these casual sexual relations.

The family background of these women showed considerable social disorganization. Less than an eighth of them had come from normal families, while more than a third were from broken homes.<sup>1</sup> There were scattered in the case records accounts of the descriptions which the unmarried mothers gave of their family background. One record contained the following account:

Patient then told story of having lived with her uncle and grandmother. She said her mother became attached to a man with whom they once lived. He left his wife and he and her mother went to live together. The grandmother reported it to the police. Her mother was arrested and, after a few days in jail, man took her out, rented a flat at —— St., took her and the four boys to live there. During this time he maintained relations with both mother and daughter to the knowledge of both. During this time pregnancy took place. Man had said he would support baby and had given her mother money to pay her room rent at this address. Her legal stepfather refused to let her stay in the home.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In attempting to treat statistically the information on the character of the family background of these women, one had to rely on statements in the case records that varied considerably as to details and reliability. The categories, "normal family" and "broken home," are simply common-sense definitions. "Normal family" means that the father and mother of the woman were living together, while "broken home" means that one or the other was dead; they are divorced or separated; or one or the other had deserted the family. The other categories, "with relatives" and "alone in Chicago," are self-explanatory.

<sup>2</sup> Case Record No. 1.

More than a half of these women had left their parents in the South. The homes from which they came in the South were often already broken by widowhood and desertion. The majority, or about a third, who came to the city were living with relatives. In some cases they came to Chicago for educational advantages. There were others, however,

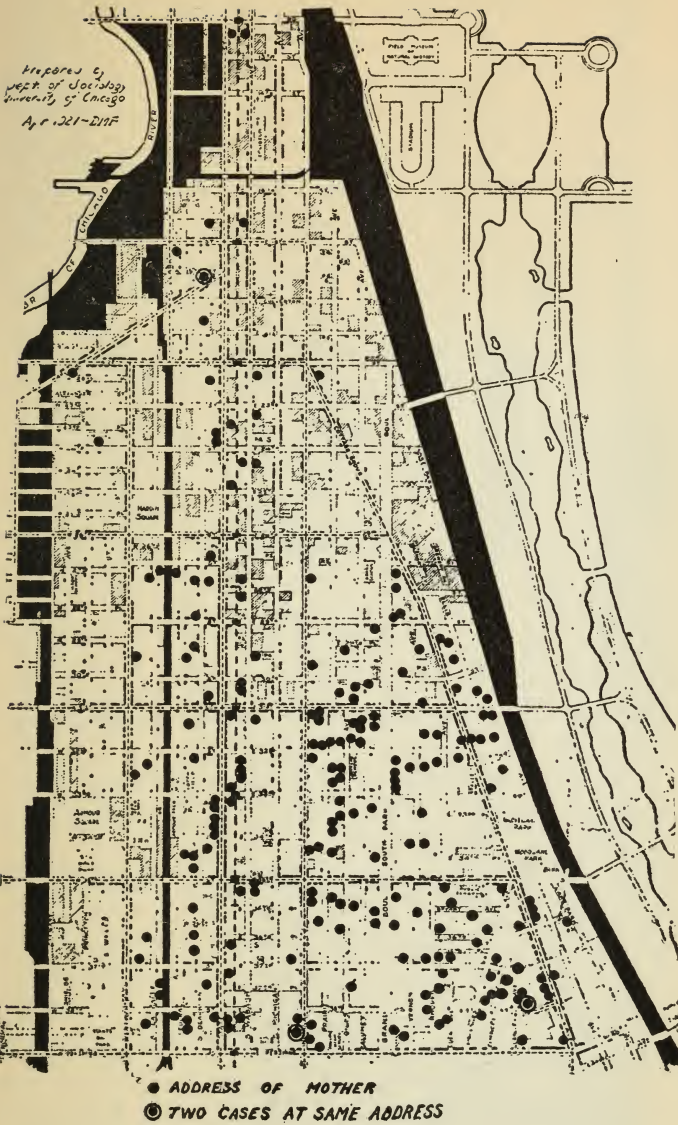
TABLE XVIII  
FAMILY SITUATION REGARDING 235 UNMARRIED NEGRO  
MOTHERS IN CHICAGO

Age of Mother	Number	Normal Family	Broken Home	With Relatives	Alone in Chicago
12.....	1	0	1	0	0
13.....	3	0	2	1	0
14.....	5	2	1	2	0
15.....	12	3	6	3	0
16.....	26	4	11	10	1
17.....	27	3	13	9	2
18.....	26	3	10	11	2
19.....	38	2	12	17	7
20.....	25	5	7	8	5
21-25.....	47	2	14	15	16
26-42.....	21	2	5	5	9
Unknown.....	4	2	1	1	0
Total.....	235	28	83	82	42

who had broken away from home ties and drifted to the city in pursuit of work and new experience.

Whatever insights one was able to get into the fundamental problems of human behavior involved in illegitimacy among Negroes were obtained from incidental facts scattered throughout these case records. A detail here and there would sometimes throw some light on the conflict between the customary morality acquired in the South by the older generation and the free and disorderly behavior of the children in the city. For example, a widowed mother who had

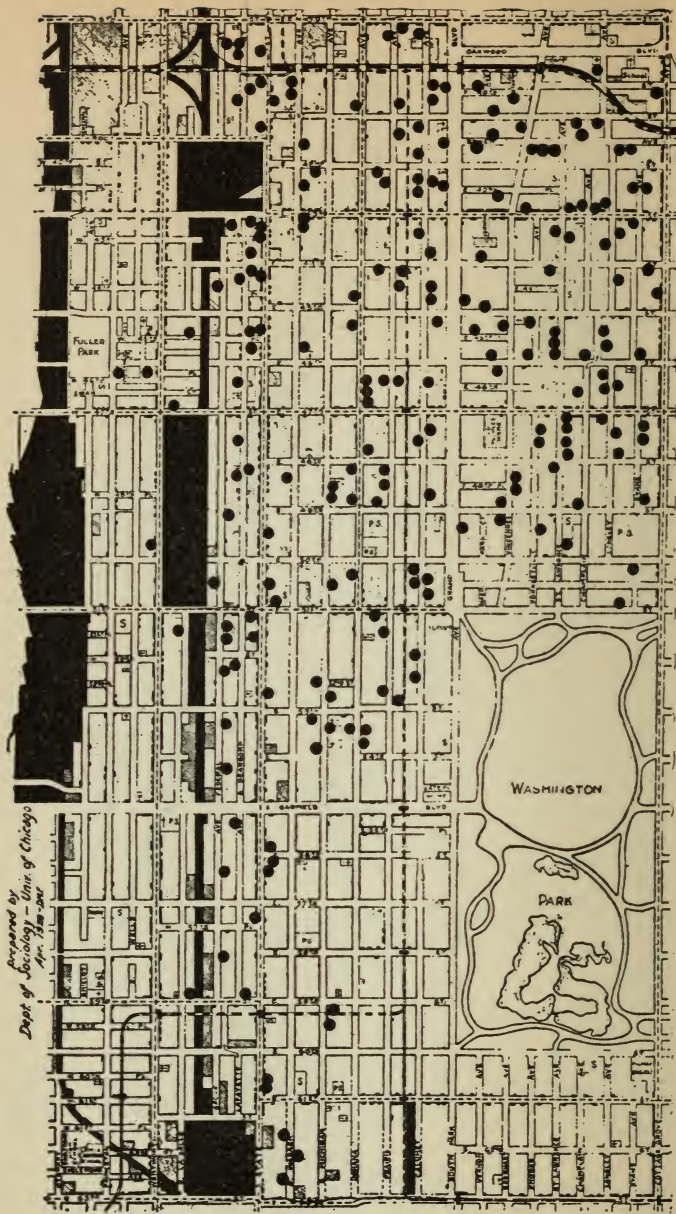
# MAP X



SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, 12TH STREET TO 39TH STREET

Distribution of 210 cases of illegitimacy among Negroes, January 1, 1926—June 30, 1928.





● ADDRESS OF MOTHER

◎ TWO CASES AT SAME ADDRESS

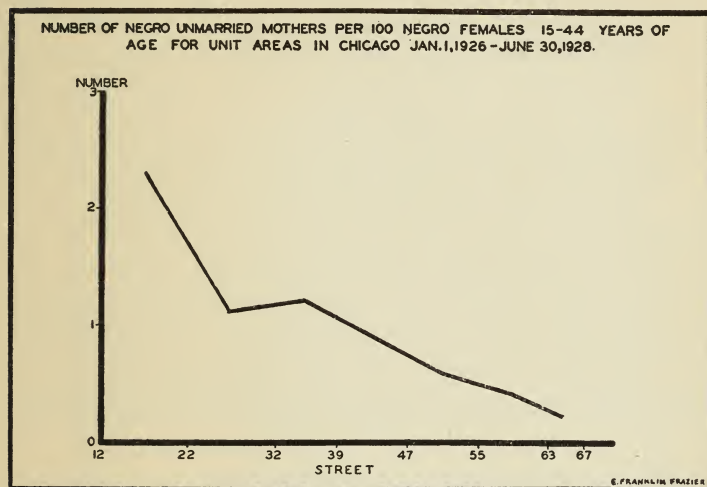
SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, 39TH STREET TO 63RD STREET

Distribution of 211 cases of illegitimacy among Negroes, January 1, 1926—June 30, 1928.



come to Chicago from Mississippi four years ago after her daughters had "paved the way" said: "I talk and talk and teach and teach and when I have done all I know how to do I can do no more. Children in these days are a heart-break."<sup>1</sup> The record stated also that this woman's daughter, who had a fourteen-year-old child, "had a husband but the

CHART XI



mother knows nothing about him." Glimpses into the disorganized family life of the women might occasionally be got from a sentence or two. A case record contained the statement that a seventeen-year-old patient had "no knowledge of her father, not even his name."<sup>2</sup> According to the record of another case a twenty-one-year old unmarried mother from Tennessee "knew nothing of her father except by name," and her "mother and father might have been

<sup>1</sup> Case Record No. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Case Record No. 201.

married.”<sup>1</sup> Scarcely in any case was one able to get from these records data which threw light on the cultural situation in which the illegitimacy took place.<sup>2</sup>

The location of illegitimacy in the Negro community gave some indication of the relation of illegitimacy to the cultural differences in the community.<sup>3</sup> Although, on the maps, the cases of illegitimacy appeared to be scattered over the entire area occupied by Negroes, the rate of illegitimacy for the seven zones showed considerable variations.<sup>4</sup> In the first zone outside of the Loop, where the poorer migrants from the South settled, over 2 per cent of the women of child-bearing age appeared among the unmarried mothers in the County Hospital. It was in this same area, as we have seen, that 8 per cent of the families applied to the charities for assistance and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of them had been deserted. In the next two zones the percentage of women who had appeared at the hospital to give birth to illegitimate children was about half as large as in the first zone. The illegitimacy rate continued to decline for the succeeding four zones. This decline was most marked in the last three zones where

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Ernest W. Burgess, "What Social Case Records Should Contain To Be Useful for Sociological Interpretation," *Social Forces*, VI (September, 1927—June, 1928), 527.

<sup>3</sup> The addresses of the Negro unmarried mothers were taken from the records of the County Hospital for the two-and-a-half-year period from January 1, 1926, to June 30, 1928, and spotted on maps. Maps X and XI indicate the location of these unmarried mothers in the two sections between Twelfth and Thirty-ninth streets; and between Thirty-ninth and Sixty-third streets where the majority of the Negro population was located.

<sup>4</sup> In the absence of birth statistics for the seven zones, an illegitimacy rate was worked out for each of these areas by determining the number of unmarried mothers to 100 women fifteen to forty-four, in each of these areas, for the two-and-a-half-year period.

we have found that family and community life tended to become stabilized. Between the first zone where about one out of forty and the seventh zone where one out of five hundred women of child-bearing age was found among the unmarried mothers in the hospital, the differences in education, occupational status, home ownership, and other indexes of culture were as marked as the differences in these illegitimacy rates.

The rates of illegitimacy for these zones were, as in the case of those for dependency, desertion, and non-support, an

TABLE XIX

NUMBER OF UNMARRIED MOTHERS AND RATE PER ONE HUNDRED FEMALES FIFTEEN TO FORTY-FOUR YEARS OF AGE IN THE SEVEN ZONES OF THE SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, CHICAGO

	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III	Zone IV	Zone V	Zone VI	Zone VII
Number.....	9	62	138	119	73	16	6
Rate.....	2.3	1.1	1.2	0.9	0.6	0.4	0.2

index to the processes of disorganization in certain levels of the Negro population. Most of these unmarried women, we have seen, came from the South where among the rural population in some sections premarital sex relations were very common.<sup>1</sup> But this behavior had a different meaning and different consequences in the simple rural community.<sup>2</sup> It meant in most communities the marriage of the couples involved and, when marriage did not take place, the child be-

<sup>1</sup> Carter G. Woodson, *The Rural Negro* (Washington, 1930), p. 136.

<sup>2</sup> "So long" says Sumner, "as the customs are simple, naïve, and unconscious, they do not produce evil in character, no matter what they are. If reflection is awakened and the mores cannot satisfy it, then doubt arises; individual character will then be corrupted and the society will degenerate" (William Graham Sumner, *Folkways* [New York, 1906], p. 420).

came a member of the family group.<sup>1</sup> The change in attitude toward illegitimacy, which reflection and living in the city with its conflicting standards brought about, was shown in the case of an unmarried mother whose sister also had an illegitimate child in the South. Although her sister had not married the father of her child, she had married someone. Concerning her own case, however, she said: "He (the father of her child) was willing to marry me, but after I come up here and had my baby I just didn't want him. I don't care to marry him now. Looks like I can get along better by myself. I seen how other girls get along."<sup>2</sup>

In the urban environment marriage in such cases does not issue from the folkways and the customs of the community but is enforced by the formal control exercised by the courts and the social agencies. An unmarried mother only fourteen years old showed the conflict in her mind concerning the morality of her marriage which was entered into in order to keep the man out of jail.

This is a problem that has been on my mind for many a day. Did I do right, by marring the father of my baby, in order of not having him sent away? Perhaps you can judge me better if I write my life story.

<sup>1</sup> On St. Helena Island, for example, where 30 per cent of the births were illegitimate, many of the couples involved married. After marriage the infrequent cases of irregular sex behavior were dealt with by the church, which expelled the offenders (T. J. Woofter, *Black Yeomanry* [New York, 1930], p. 207).

<sup>2</sup> Manuscript document. One may find, of course, a somewhat similar attitude expressed by unmarried mothers on the plantations of the rural South. For example, an unmarried mother on a plantation in Alabama remarked that the father of her illegitimate child wanted to marry her but since her dead husband had been so mean she did not want "to be bothered" with another husband. She expressed a simple and instinctive love of children and appeared quite unconscious of the institutional relations involved. Her mother, born the year before emancipation, had begotten her out of wedlock after leaving a shiftless husband.



My name is C—— E——. I was born in M——, Ga. on January ——, 1915. My parents owned a little farm of their own, and raised vegetables, cattle, swines and poultry. My mother had eight children, four living and four dead. My sister and I was good pals. When I was five years old I attended school in Ga. it was called the Philis Chapter.

My parents was always fighting and finally they sold the farm. My mother came to Chicago with my brother who was then three years old and my sister and I stayed with my grandmother. One day in school a girl about my sisters age had to stay in for recess. The teacher had some gum on her desk and the girl bit a piece of it. When we came in from recess the first thing the teacher noticed was the gum. She didn't say anything about it until it was time to go home, then she asked the girl if she had bit the gum. The girl told her it was me who had did it and I had to stay until the others had gone home. Then she let me go. The next day a girl told the teacher that my sister had taken a book from her. The teacher whip her after we had gone home and my grandmother didn't let me go there anymore.

Two weeks later we also came to Chicago on the train. My mother and uncle met us at the station. We were living with my uncle and aunt at 36th and Wabash. About three months after we had come to the city. Then my grandmother went back south. We moved from there to 45th and Champlain. My stepfather was very nice to us. One day in May my mother went to a friend's house to help him put up beer. My stepfather was very angry when he came home. Mother didn't come home until late that night and was very drunk. Then began one of the worsted fights that a man and woman can have. After that there were many more fights. That all happened in May and on the 4th of February my little step sister were born.

She was a beautiful baby and never nursed from a mother's breast, and didn't have much fresh air and sunshine. Because of that she was a sickly little girl from babyhood. My mother was sick thirty days before she were born and was sick for six months after.

When my sister were three months old my stepfather got behind in his rent and had to move. My older sister and I stayed with my uncle and aunt on 59—— Grove Avenue. We attended the S—— School there and met many boys and girls. There were lots of bad girls there and they learned my sister how to smoke and drink. The S—— School had many fights, my sister were in most of them, but I have never had a fight with any one in my life. I met a boy named C—— W—— and

one named U——. I liked C—— W—— very much but I didn't care for the other boy. I was ten years old then. We stayed with my uncle for four months and we moved to 61st and State Street, and this is the place where my whole life was changed. I met a boy there named T—— W—— and he was born in A——, Illinois. He had one brother and six sisters. All of them thought I was a very nice child. He was eight years older than I was and I was simple wild about him from the time I was ten years old to the time I was thirteen, he was always picking me, trying to get me to go in the basement with him or meeting him in the alleys at night. One Sunday everybody went out and left my little sister there with me. I would rather read than to go out to play. I loved to read True Stories. T—— and his brother lived with their marraid sister and her husband. They had a large four seater studebaker and had two childrens also. T——'s sister and my mother were good friends. They would go out to parties and get drunk then come home and fight it out with their husbands. In May 1928 T——'s sister were suddenly taken ill. In the evenings I would go around and help her with the dishes and cooking. When she got better we would go for long rides in the car, six of us altogether. T—— and I were together all the time now.

One evening when everybody were gone out but T—— and I we had what you called a Sex Relations or an Intercourse with each other. This happened on the 25th day of June. Soon after that I found out that I was in the family way. I was very scared because I didn't know what it was then, but I do now. In August my mother began to notice me and question me. Finally, I had to tell her. We had moved to 59th and Wabash, and I was going to the S—— School. My mother was very angry when I told her and she sent for T——. When he came over he told her it wasn't he who did it but it was somebody else. I went back to school in September for one month until my mother wouldn't let me go anymore. The truant officers came to see what was the matter. She was surprised when told, because I had a good reputation, in school. She had it reported to the Juvenilnle Court and a probation officer were sent out to investigate. In February they had T—— arrested. I was attending the County Hospital for treatments. In March my baby were born. I was fourteen years old then. When she was three weeks old we had to go to court on 26th and California Avenue. It was put off until June 11 and from June 11 to June 24.

On the 17th day of June T—— was let out off jail on bond and we were married the same day after school at C—— P——, Indiana. On the 24th of June we had to go back to court and the judge were surprised at what we did and the case were dismissed from court. My husband is crazy about the baby but doesn't want anymore. He come over to see me every night. Now my name is Mrs. T—— W——. I will ask you again. Did I do right?<sup>1</sup>

The above document reveals in a striking manner some of the important factors in the cultural situation in which a large number of cases of illegitimacy takes place: the great mobility of the Negro population; the dissolution of family life; the loss of parental control; and the demoralization of the migrant in the city. The family conflict in the South which in this case ended by the migration of the mother and her son to Chicago was renewed when the mother acquired another husband without getting a divorce. The girl said concerning her mother's remarriage in Chicago:

My mother she came to Chicago when I was eight years old with my brother and she left me and my sister with my grandmother. My mother left my father and come to Chicago and when she got up here why she married another man. She just come up here and married but she didn't git a divorce. My grandmother had a farm. She worked on the farm. My mother and father used to fight all the time. He just sold the farm and my sister and I lived with my grandmother. He lived with his peoples. When I was ten years old why my stepfather sent after me and my sister and grandmother.<sup>2</sup>

The great mobility of the section of the Negro population from which many of these women came was shown by the numerous places in which they had lived. For example, an unmarried mother who had two illegitimate children—the first of which was the result of rape by her stepfather—told

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



the following story of the wanderings of her mother who had sent her and her sister about the country.

I was born in Rome, Georgia, September 17, 1911. I don't know much about my father because mother and he was not living together. He came to Tennessee. I guess I was around five or six years old. He went away to Knoxville and the next letter we received, he was dead. . . . When I was small my mother carried me from Rome, Georgia, to Tennessee and placed me in an orphan asylum until she was about to take me out. When I was two years old I took dropsy. She brought me home from the asylum when I was five years old. After that, my father and mother separated but I don't know when but I know my sister and my other sister went with my father to Macon and he married again. Then mother got a letter that my youngest sister died there. He didn't even write mother and tell her. So she took me down there and brought my other sister back to Chattanooga, Tennessee. She took me down to my grandparents. Then she sent me to my aunty. Sister was ten years old then, so mother took her and let her stay with my aunty. After that she stayed down there with my aunt until she was fourteen and ran away to get married. Mother carried us to Virginia and from there to Cincinnati. Then I went back to my aunt and stayed there until I was ten. During that time mother went to Detroit, Columbus, Ohio, and Indianapolis. Indianapolis is where she met my step father. She had known him ever since she met my father. We lived in Indianapolis until I was fourteen. My step-father is now in the penn. for rape—from two to 21 years. He is there now over two years. After that I started working in private family, and my mother she started traveling. She went to Gary, Muncie, Michigan and Illinois, Benton Harbor, St. Jo and Peoria. She wanted me to come here and I have been here ever since.<sup>1</sup>

The wanderings of the migrant Negro do not cease in the city. In the disorganized areas of the city of Chicago the Negro population is constantly moving about. One unmarried mother could remember only the following places she had lived during six years of residence in Chicago: "Twenty-

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.



ninth and Dearborn Street, Aldine Square, Forty-first and South Parkway, Forty-eighth and Vincennes, 60th and State, 47th and Wabash, 49th and Dearborn, and 115th and Kinzington." Such movement on the part of the population, as well as the changing character of the areas into which the migrants generally move, prevent the establishment of settled life. The unmarried mother who gave the above list of places she had lived furnished a description of several of these neighborhoods in which she had lived. She was born in Tennessee and had lived in Chicago six years, after spending some time in St. Louis. One of her chief recollections of her life in that city was given as follows:

I remember one night my father and a friend of his'n—well they was coming home and my father had on overalls and he had his gun and we asked him where he was going. He said he wouldn't be gone long. Well, way late that night the police come and wanted to know if we knew J—— T—— and I said yes—that was my daddy, and we asked him what he did. The police say that he loaned a fellow his gun to kill another boy. And that he was going to have to serve some time. Well, the next morning about five o'clock here comes my father home and he told us what happened and the next day he left and came to Chicago. My mother couldn't stand outside of the door without the police would be standing there watching her. My father wrote home to my mother but wouldn't sign his name. Finally one day my aunty asked me would I like to go see someone and I said who, and she said your father. We left Saturday night and got here Sunday morning. Mamma came about two weeks after that.<sup>1</sup>

In St. Louis, because of her long hair, which she was supposed to have inherited from an Indian ancestor, she had danced on the stage when only four years old. She had continued to dance occasionally in Chicago in the cheap theaters on the South Side. The description of one of the neighborhoods in which she lived was given by her as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

I lived on 29th and Dearborn—the worst place I ever saw. I used to go to the Drake School, I think that was the name—on Wabash and 25th. Them children down there was bad. They used to carry knives and guns. A man used to follow me every day when I was going to school. When I would turn and look back he would turn to. It like to scared me to death and I told my father and he said we would have to move from there. That was a terrible building—one day a man who was looking for a job followed my father home and pulled out his razor and told my father to hand over his pay and he gave the man his little \$50.00. In that building they used to kill little babies. I don't know how they killed them, but the janitor would find these dead babies down in the basement. They would just be new born babies.<sup>1</sup>

Of her cousin whom she cared for more than any other member of her family, she said: "I got a cousin that boot-legs, when I was living at 41st and South Parkway. It ain't no cousin—cause she is just living with this man. Cause everytime I see her she is with a different man."<sup>2</sup>

It was at the home of this cousin that she met "beaux." The building in which her cousin lived was on the edge of the third zone.

That building where my cousin lives at now is terrible. I remember one time they shot crap from one o'clock at night on up till in the morning. You know what—that building ain't nothin' but for . . . (female homo-sexuals). I heard so much about . . . (female homo-sexuals) so one day I asked my cousin what was a . . . (female homo-sexual) and so she said she would show me some of them. She said it was two . . . (female homo-sexuals) in that building and they got to fighting and one pulled the other's clothes off. I tried to get her to tell me what a . . . (female homo-sexual) was but she never did tell me. Some of them women in that building was a hustling. You know, they sell themselves. A man go up there, you know, and then they charge them \$2.00. Men used to go up there all the time. There was an old woman there who used to come up to my cousin's and she said to me one day, "Say, honey when are you going up to my house and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

sleep with me?" She used to pat me down, and I turned around to her and one of the men in the house told her to let me alone I was a little girl. I remember one time all the girls and boys were out there in front of her house and she said for us all to go inside she couldn't make no money out there with all of us around. Police used to go up there and raid the place all the time. One night I was looking out the window and the patrol backed up to the door and I called L—— right away she ran and locked up the trunk. She said, "I got to get rid of this moonshine." They didn't come in my cousin's. They took men and women out of that building—some just had step-ins on and some of the men were bare foot. That place was so bad. I learned too much down there. Well, I'm glad that I did learn what I did for I can keep out of trouble from now on.<sup>1</sup>

The precociousness of this fourteen-year-old unmarried mother in knowledge of sexual matters, normal and abnormal, and other forms of vice was a reflection of the demoralized behavior that was characteristic of the third zone and of the members of her family who defined sex for her.<sup>2</sup> The histories of a large number of these youthful mothers gave evidence of the stimulation of an interest in sex at an early age. In some cases their first experience as unmarried mothers was a prelude to the more sophisticated modes of behavior that were common in this area.<sup>3</sup> They often formed attachments similar to that described in a newspaper account of a murder in this area.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> A mulatto woman in domestic service made the following significant comment about her relations with men. "While my father was a white man and people told me I had as much right to go with a white man as I wanted to, my reason that I have never mingled with them is because if I was going to have that kind of man he would have to put me in a house and take care of me. I feel that they should treat me just like they treat their own women; *just like my father treated my mother.*"

<sup>3</sup> The girl who furnished the document has since taken up a type of life such as that described in the newspaper item in spite of the efforts of social workers to reform her.



The vice dives of the South Side, hatcheries of crime, gave birth to another lurid killing Sunday morning when Ruby Sartin, 3128 Wabash Avenue, 18 year old woman of the streets, entered the home of Emma Ford, 3815 State Street, and shot and killed the other woman during a drunken brawl over a man. . . .

Ruby Sartin, lured from her high school career by the bright lights, and led into a life of sin by her devotion to Charlie Price, who did not deign to soil his hands by toil, eked out a miserable existence for herself, sharing all she made with her "man," till Price left her broken and worn to enter an "unholy alliance" with Emma Ford.

The Ruby fell into the hands of Geraldine Phelps, 3334 State Street, an older woman, who also had had her fling with Price, and had been discarded when no longer attractive or useful. Geraldine took her in, and played the rôle of confidential friend. Discovering Ruby's smouldering hatred for her successful rival, it is believed that the other jealous woman fanned it into flame.<sup>1</sup>

Not only in the third zone but in those areas where demoralization was less complete, the absence of community standards and the dissolution of the moral order, which rested on the intimate relations of the small community in the South, made the individual the prey of all forms of suggestion. Many of the contacts that led to sexual relations were formed from the casual and impersonal contacts of city life. One girl, for example, met the father of her child at the newspaper stand conducted by her mother. Others told how they became acquainted with men at moving picture houses, theaters, and dance halls. One said: "I happen to go to the show sometimes and sitting there, they come in and say "hello" and I say "hello" but keep looking at the picture. Sometimes they will go home with me. And maybe I will have them come out to my house sometimes."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, in the city where the printed page plays such an important part, literature has helped to define the meaning of sex for

<sup>1</sup> The *Chicago Whip*, November 23, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> Manuscript document.



many of them. The remark of one girl that she read "*Love Stories, True Stories, Love Affairs, True Confessions, and Fairy Tales*" was common. It is interesting that one girl recounted in her life-history a story from one of these magazines that centered around the romantic career of an unmarried mother and her child.

In a number of cases irregular sex behavior was a pattern taken over from the groups of which these girls happened to be members. This appeared to be the case with the girl who wrote the following concerning the beginning of her sex experiences.

One day a girl friend of mine told me that a boy name D—— W—— said that he seen me and another girl coming out of the bathroom with two boys. The next day I seen him I asked him he said that he did not say it. Every day I began to see him more. One day he asked me to go with him I said yes. Every day I would come home with him. All the girls was jealous of him they use to tell me that he go with another girl. He said that he did not I belive him. One hot summer night I was in Ellis Park on 37th I met D——. I asked him where did he live he said 36—— Cottage Grove, last fl. After a while along came a girl name L—— B—— and her boy friend. We all sat out in the Park a while He asked me if I would let him have it I said no The girl and boy kept on telling me to go head it won't hurt you I said I was afraid After a while I did. After he took me home the next night I did it again. One Sunday I was in the show I met him After the show him and his boy friend and a girl I don't know who she was but the boy is name J—— G——. We went over to his house. J—— started the radio. We dance a while The boys turn out the light I and D—— went in the outhouse room. After that he taken me home I began to love him very much I thought it was no body like him.<sup>1</sup>

This document also gives a suggestion of the widespread lack of parental supervision of behavior in Negro homes. In

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document. In some cases where the mother is employed there are other women in the home. "All but 15.2 per cent of all children un-

many cases this is due to the absence from home of the mother who is a wage-earner. More important was the general absence of control over the association of boys and girls. Many of the girls began to have "beaux" with the apparent sanction of the parents when they were twelve and thirteen. This led in some cases to early marriage which, we have seen in the last chapter, characterized the areas inhabited by the poorer migrants. Having a "beau" generally meant the beginning of sex relations; and when a man asked for a girl's "company" it was implied that sex relations would result. In fact when one unmarried mother of sixteen years of age recounted her "beaux" she spoke of being "single" for six months or without a "beau." This behavior which was characteristic of the areas of high illegitimacy rates was sharply differentiated from the behavior of the young girls in those areas at the southern end of the Negro community which were relatively free from illegitimacy. The girls in many of the families in the zones in the southern part of the community only begin to receive male callers or "have company" with their parents' sanction when they are eighteen or, in some cases, complete high school, and this event is often signalized by some ceremonial. For example, a girl in the seventh zone who had completed the high school when sixteen told of the discussion in her family over the question whether she was eligible to receive company after she completed high school, in view of the fact that her older sisters were not permitted to have company until their eighteenth

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der sixteen," Miss Graham found in her sample, "are in the homes where there is some woman in the home every day. We cannot tell whether the others are cared for by a neighbor, a day nursery, or by no one," "Family Support and Dependency among Chicago Negroes: A Study of Unpublished Census Data," *Social Service Review*, III, 259.

birthday which coincided with their graduation from high school.

Although the majority of the unmarried mothers, as we have seen, were under twenty, there were many of mature years. Some of them had given birth to several illegitimate children, and among them were women who had lived with the same man for a number of years.<sup>1</sup> One woman not included in the group for which statistics were given had had eight or ten children by the same man with whom she had lived during the entire time she was having the children. He had supported her and the children as well as he could. This type of sex behavior which is outside of the mores and the conventions of the group should be differentiated from the types of illegitimacy which have been considered above. For in such cases a "natural" family group has come into existence to satisfy the desire for response which expresses itself in the devotion of the mother to her children and the two parents for each other.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, among the group that lives outside of the mores and conventions of society, illegitimacy has a different value or meaning from that which society places upon it. This is shown in the case of a young woman who had had an illegitimate child and became pregnant a second time. She expressed her doubt as to the attitude of the father of the child toward illegitimacy. Her first child was born while she and the man "were just keeping company with each other." Concerning her second pregnancy and subsequent marriage she said:

My husband was rooming at my mother's house and we didn't have intercourse there in the house but we had it before we married. We

<sup>1</sup> See document, p. 8 above.

<sup>2</sup> W. I. Thomas, *The Unadjusted Girl* (Boston, 1928), pp. 17-18.

hadn't planned to marry because I already had a kid, and I didn't think he would marry me, but he said his sister had one and that she wasn't married. So we married.<sup>1</sup>

Our analysis of illegitimacy has not included the sporadic cases which come to light occasionally among the higher levels of the Negro population. One of these cases, in which persons with a background of conventional morality and education were involved, was found in the hospital group. Unconventional sex behavior in such cases had a different significance from that of the peasant Negro from the South, nor was it in the same category with the demoralized behavior of the third zone. Although the sex behavior in such cases represented a break with traditional morality of the families from which these persons came, it was not an expression of random and vagrant impulses but a personal schematization or organization of life which is characteristic of the behavior in the modern larger community where many contradictory standards prevail.<sup>2</sup>

Negroes in Chicago, as in other cities, have furnished a disproportionately large part of the illegitimate births. When these cases were studied, however, in relation to the social structure of the community, this aspect of family disorganization, like desertion and non-support, tended to disappear among those elements of the community which, because of superior economic and social status, were relatively segregated from the great mass. Illegitimacy was found to

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> W. I. Thomas, *op. cit.*, chap. iii. See also Katherine B. Davis, *Factors in the Sex Life of Twenty-two Hundred Women* (New York, 1929), pp. 351-53. A fifth (19.4 per cent) of the 1,200 college women to whom Dr. Davis sent questionnaires concerning their sex life justified pre-marital sexual intercourse in women. One-eighth (12.7 per cent) of the 1,200 women had indulged in pre-marital sexual intercourse.



be an aspect of the general breakdown in the urban environment of the customary controls which characterized the rural and simple communities from which a majority of the persons involved have come. Moreover, in the most disorganized area of the Negro community illegitimacy was one of the results of the well-nigh complete demoralization of the individual. In some cases the unmarried mothers, because of their youth, became problems for the Juvenile Court. To the problem of juvenile delinquency, as it was related to the breakdown of family discipline and community organization, we shall now turn in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER X

### JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

When we turn to the study of juvenile delinquency we find, as in the case of desertions and illegitimacy, that Negroes furnish a disproportionate number of cases in most cities for which statistics are available. In New York City the proportion of Negro children arraigned in the Children's Court increased from 4.2 per cent in 1919 to 8 per cent in 1925, although the Negro population was only 2.7 per cent of the total in 1920.<sup>1</sup> In Indianapolis, Gary, and Dayton the proportion of Negro cases was from three to four times as large as their relative numbers in the population. Likewise, in three southern cities, Richmond, Memphis, and Charleston, South Carolina, Negroes furnished about one and a half times as large a proportion of the delinquency cases as their relative numbers in the population of these cities.<sup>2</sup>

Juvenile delinquency among the Negroes of Chicago has shown the same tendency as in other northern cities. Since 1900 there has been an increase in the proportion of Negro cases. This increase has been most marked since the migrations from the South during and since the World War. In 1925 nearly a fifth of the boys and girls brought into the Juvenile Court were Negroes. Not all of the cases of juvenile delinquency were brought into the court. In 1926 there were 1,322 Negro boys arrested for juvenile delinquency,

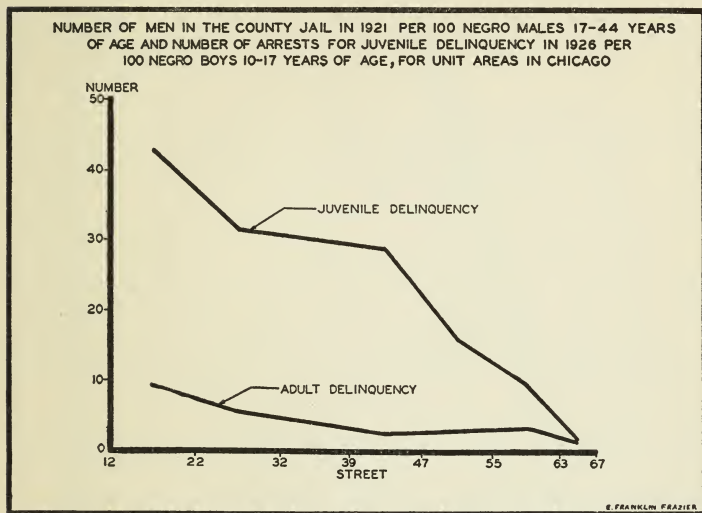
<sup>1</sup> *A Study of Delinquent and Neglected Children before the New York City Children's Court in 1925*, Joint Committee on Negro Child Study (New York, 1927), p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> See T. J. Woofter, Jr., *Negro Problems in Cities* (New York, 1928), p. 227.

although only 320 cases were taken to the court. In 1927 the number of arrests had increased to 1,503.<sup>1</sup>

The increase in the number of Negro delinquents has followed the movement of the Negro population into the areas

CHART XII



which have been characterized by a high delinquency rate. Clifford R. Shaw says in this connection:

The white Protestants, most of whom are native born, have in the process of the growth of Chicago, gradually moved out of the areas of deterioration where the rate of delinquency is high. The Negro on the

<sup>1</sup> "In the city of Chicago practically all complaints alleging juvenile delinquency come to the attention of the juvenile police probation officers who are assigned to the Juvenile Court by the superintendent of the Police Department and are under the direction of a lieutenant of police in the Juvenile Court Building. In 1926 there were twenty-eight such officers assigned to the forty police districts of the city. When a complaint is made at the police station or the child is 'picked up' by a police officer, the case is referred to the

other hand, because of his lower economic status, has tended to move into the area of deterioration near the "Loop," thus supplanting to a certain extent the white Protestant population in this area. The increase in the percentage of the Negro cases brought to court may be due to some extent to the type of area in which this racial group is forced to live.<sup>1</sup>

The high delinquent rate which has characterized the area near the Loop, where a large part of the Negro popula-

TABLE XX\*

PERCENTAGE OF NEGRO CASES IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DELINQUENT BOYS AND GIRLS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUVENILE COURT DURING EACH FIFTH YEAR, 1900-1930

Year	1900	1905	1910	1915	1920	1925	1930
Boys.....	4.7	5.1	5.5	6.2	9.9	17.1	21.7
Girls.....	11.0	5.8	8.1	13.8	20.7	18.2	20.9

\* Taken from Clifford R. Shaw and Earl D. Myers, "The Juvenile Delinquent," chap. xiv of the *Illinois Crime Survey* (Chicago, 1929), pp. 667, 669. The data for 1930 were supplied by Clifford R. Shaw.

tion has found a foothold in the city, has existed over a period of thirty years "notwithstanding the fact that the (racial) composition has changed markedly."<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, Shaw's studies of delinquency have indicated that there were variations in the rates of delinquency for

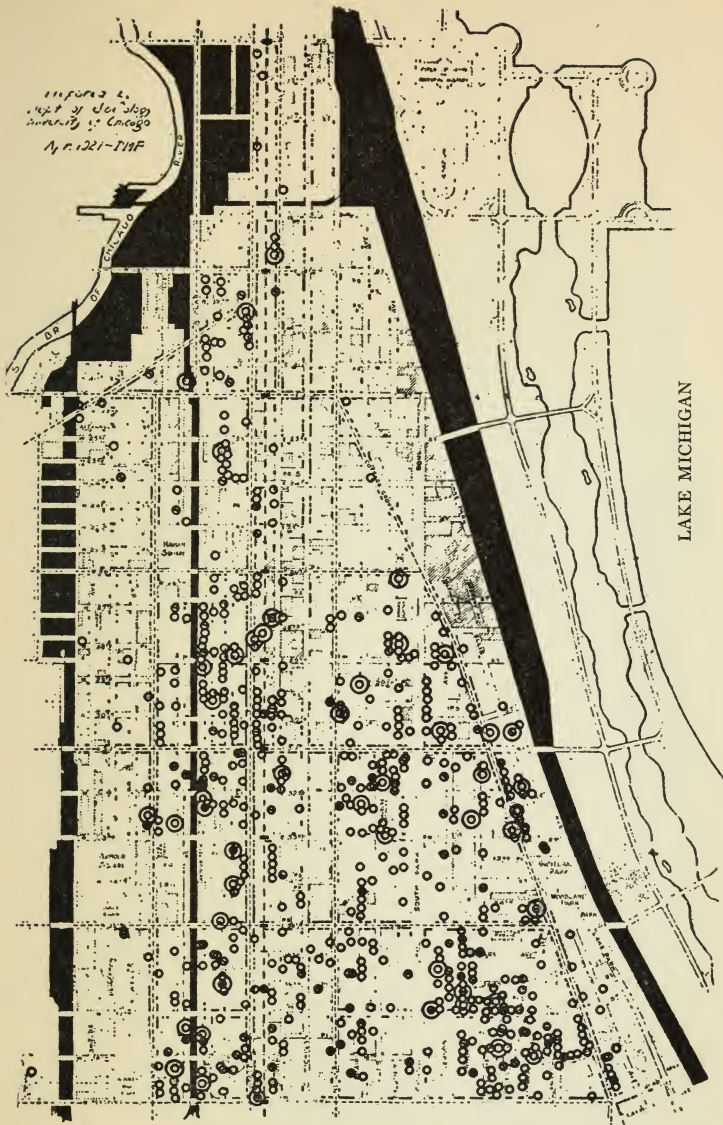
police probation officer of the district. This officer may dispose of the case either with or without court action. The juvenile police probation officers' records showed 9,243 individual boys against whom complaints alleging delinquency were made during the year 1926" (Clifford R. Shaw, *Delinquency Areas* [Chicago, 1929], p. 53). The statistics which form the basis of this chapter were taken from the records of the Institute for Juvenile Research. See Table XVI, Appendix B.

<sup>1</sup> Shaw and Myers, *The Illinois Crime Survey*, p. 670. The percentage of German and Irish cases brought to court has decreased since 1900 while the percentage of Polish cases, like the Negro cases, has increased (*ibid.*, p. 667).

<sup>2</sup> Clifford R. Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 203.



# MAP XII



- BOY ARRESTED ONCE
- ⊙ BOY " TWICE
- ⊗ BOY " THREE TIMES
- ⊕ TWO BOYS AT SAME ADDRESS
- ⊖ THREE " " "
- ⊗ FOUR " " "
- ⊕ BROTHERS

SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, 12TH STREET TO 39TH STREET  
 Distribution of 630 Negro boys arrested for juvenile delinquency, 1926



SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, 39TH STREET TO 63RD STREET  
Distribution of 638 Negro boys arrested for juvenile delinquency, 1926

different sections of the Negro community. In computing rates of delinquency for one-mile intervals along the main thoroughfares radiating from the Loop, he found that the decline in rates along the radial passing through the area occupied by the Negro population was similar to that in the case of other radials.<sup>1</sup> Variations in the rates of juvenile delinquency in the Negro population, when studied alone, were brought out when the Negro cases were distributed in the community and rates worked out for the seven zones into which we have divided the community. The variations in the rates of delinquency showed the same trend, which we have found in the case of dependency, desertions, illegitimacy, and other indexes of family and social disorganization.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the decline in the rates of juvenile delinquency showed a trend similar to the variations in the rates of adult delinquency in these areas.

In the first zone near the "Loop," where deterioration and the encroachment of business and industry were forcing the

<sup>1</sup> Clifford R. Shaw, "Correlation of Rate of Juvenile Delinquency with Certain Indices of Community Organization and Disorganization," *Publications of the American Sociological Society*, XXII (1928), 174-79. Shaw did not calculate the delinquency rates for the Negroes separately but for the entire population, which for the area through which the State Street radial passed was made up principally of Negroes.

<sup>2</sup> The distribution of Negro boys brought before the Juvenile Court from January 1, 1923, to June 1, 1924, and Negro boys arrested for Juvenile delinquency during the years 1926 and 1927, according to census tracts and zones, is shown in Table XVI, Appendix B. The statistics for boys brought before the Juvenile Court were taken from a map prepared in the social research laboratory of the Local Community Research Committee at the University of Chicago. Statistics for arrests for juvenile delinquency and men in the County Jail were secured from the materials collected by the Institute for Juvenile Research. The addresses of boys arrested during 1926 were spotted on maps (see Maps XII and XIII). In some cases the boys were arrested as often as six times. The frequency of arrests is indicated by variations in the symbols.



Negro families further south, the thirty-three boys who were arrested for juvenile delinquency in 1926 represented over two-fifths of the boys from ten to seventeen years of age in the area. In this same area 10 per cent of the adult Negro males were in the County Jail in 1921.<sup>1</sup> The next three zones showed only a slight improvement over the first in regard to juvenile delinquency.<sup>2</sup> Three boys out of ten in these areas were arrested for juvenile delinquency and some of these boys were arrested three and four times during the year.

TABLE XXI

PERCENTAGE OF ADULT MALES IN COUNTY JAIL AND PERCENTAGE OF BOYS TEN TO SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE ARRESTED FOR JUVENILE DELINQUENCY IN THE SEVEN ZONES OF THE SOUTH SIDE NEGRO COMMUNITY, CHICAGO

	Zone I	Zone II	Zone III	Zone IV	Zone V	Zone VI	Zone VII
Males in County Jail:							
1921.....	9.4	6.7	3.8	2.5	2.9	3.2	1.2
Arrests for juvenile delinquency: 1926.....	42.8	31.4	30.0	28.8	15.7	9.6	1.4

A decided decrease in the delinquency rate appeared in the fifth zone where police probation officers had complaints against 15 per cent of the boys. In the sixth zone, as in the case of family desertion and illegitimacy, the delinquency rate continued to decline sharply, and in the seventh zone less than 2 per cent of the boys had complaints brought against them for delinquency.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I.e., males seventeen to forty-four years of age.

<sup>2</sup> The rate of delinquency for the first zone might have been exaggerated since a small error in the estimation of the population for 1926 would greatly increase the delinquency rate in the small population of this area.

<sup>3</sup> For the period, January 1, 1923, to June 1, 1924, only two boys from the sixth zone and none from the seventh zone were brought before the Juvenile



The highest rates of juvenile delinquency were in those areas of the Negro community which were characterized, as we have seen, by deterioration and social disorganization. In these areas the customary forms of social control in the Negro group tended to decay, family discipline disappeared, especially in the case of the many broken homes, and even the well-organized families lost much of their influence over the behavior of the children.<sup>1</sup> Many of the boys took over from other boys and gangs the patterns of delinquent behavior that characterized these areas. The vicious and delinquent patterns of behavior, which have become traditional in the sections of cities where large numbers of Negroes are generally forced to live, are often transmitted to the stable Negro families. A Negro social worker from a good family background wrote the following concerning the influence of the vicious behavior, in the community where she was reared, on her younger sisters, one of whom became delinquent.

When our neighborhood began to be more thickly populated it became known as the "red light district" for white sporting people. As the city grew they were always being forced farther out and as this was the edge of the city they were permitted to live in this vicinity. I remember when my mother would go away from home my sisters would make believe they were sporting people and roll up newspapers

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Court. During the same period, Roseland and Englewood were also free from Juvenile Court cases. Morgan Park had only three cases. See Table XVI, Appendix B.

<sup>1</sup> In a recent study of delinquent and neglected Negro children in New York City it was shown that the most common charges against the boys were disorderly conduct and the desertion of home and in the cases of the girls approximately 85 per cent of them were charged with desertion of home and ungovernable and wayward conduct, while, among the whites, stealing and burglary were the most common charges (*A Study of Delinquent and Neglected Children before the New York City Children's Court in 1925*, Joint Committee on Negro Child Study [New York, 1927], p. 6).

and pretend they were smoking cigarettes and even try to imitate their language by swearing.<sup>1</sup>

The case of a delinquent boy in the third zone shows the relationship between the family situation and the community background and the high delinquency rate in this area. We give first the following brief summary of the boy's delinquent career:

In March, 1926, M—— T——, 12 years 7 months, was arraigned with three other boys older than himself for breaking into a fish market at 33—— South State Street one evening in January. They entered the market by breaking the glass in the rear door and secured a watch and steel revolver, besides damaging the telephone box. They gave the watch and revolver to a man named G—— who was supposed to room at 31—— Prairie Avenue. This man promised to pay them but did not. They also admitted burglarizing a flat on West 36th Street where they got a watch and a revolver. They sold the watch to A—— A——, 11 years old, and the gun to L—— J——, 15 years old, getting \$1.00 for each. The case was continued until the father of one of the boys could be secured. In October M—— T—— was arrested in Gary and charged with the larceny of an automobile. He had been a source of trouble during his parole in Chicago. His mother brought him to the Juvenile Court and asked that he be placed in the Detention Home. He was sent there but escaped after two attempts. He was caught and returned a week later and sent to St. Charles School for Boys. In May, 1927, he was again sent to St. Charles for attempted burglary of a Standard Oil Station. In each case he was in the company of the same boys. In January, 1930, he was arrested on suspicion for attempting to rob a meat truck but was released on February 2nd. He was returned home but left within a few hours and was not heard from again until February 10th when he was shot through the arm while he and five others were attempting to hold up a store. He was sent to the Bridewell.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> The writer is indebted for the information in this case to Mr. Earl R. Moses, who has made an intensive study of delinquent Negro boys in Chicago.

The boy, M——, was born in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1913 and was taken to Washington, D.C., when he was five years old. After the family, consisting of his father, mother, two sisters, and a brother, all three younger than himself, had remained in Washington six years, they came to Chicago. The father was employed at unskilled work while the mother engaged in day work. Neither parent was at home from six in the morning until five-thirty in the afternoon. The mother told the following story of the beginning of the boy's delinquencies soon after coming to Chicago.

We were living at —— and there was a boy who used to come over to see M——. Him and this boy was great friends so one day—one Sunday it was, I had gone to church and was on my way back and when they saw me coming they ran. I had about fifteen dollars in a little bank and they had thrown it out of the back window in the alley and ran down the stairs and got it and went off. Of course M—— says the other boy did it so the boy's mamma gave me his part back. That was about a year after we came to Chicago and ever since then M—— has been doing something. He has a gang of boys that he goes around with and I can't do anything with him. He began when he was about twelve years old to stay away from home and school. I would send him to school and he would even go to school but jest as soon as that gang, what he would run around with, would come by and whistle he would get an excuse and leave. I did not know this until one day I was going over to my sister's house and I saw him and a whole bunch of boys going under the tressel when I thought he was at school. Well then, I walks fast and catches him and takes him home and got after him about running away from school and he said that the boys came by for him and he went. I then goes to the school and asks the teacher about him and she said that he had been staying out of school for a long time and whenever he did come, and she would ask him where he had been, he would tell her that his mother had kept him out to go places for her and there I didn't even know that he had not been to school. When we first came to Chicago and M—— would be out late in the

night playing, I told Mr. T—— that he ought not to let M—— stay out so late playing around with these boys here and he would say "O let the boy play."<sup>1</sup>

There are several important factors that should be noted concerning the origin of the boy's delinquency. The absence of both father and mother from the home during the greater part of the day prevented the development of common interests and the sharing of a common experience. There was a difference of opinion, which led to conflict, between the parents themselves over the restrictions that should be placed on the boy's playing at night. The attempt of the father by the use of severe corporal punishment to force the boy to remain at home and to attend school regularly only accentuated his dislike of home and opposition to parental control. As the younger brother told the investigator: "You know the reason M—— don't come home? Papa used to whip him every time he would stay off. Mamma says that is what is the matter now. He never whips me much because I don't do anything but go to school." The younger brother's statement was confirmed by the mother in the presence of the father. When the latter excused his whipping the boy severely because he wanted him to stay at home and go to school, adding, "I'd give anything if he'd just do that; so that's why I whipped him. I tried to get him to see it that way but I could not," the mother replied:

Yes, but there was no need to kill him because you couldn't get him your way after he had already gone wrong. Honest its the truth, sometimes Mr. T—— wouldn't even know that I was out of bed—out in the cold and snow looking for M—— and he would be home sleeping without a care, it seems, and as soon as I would get the child home and call him and tell him I had found our boy, he would jump up and go to beating him. Why he got so bad at it until even our neighbors

<sup>1</sup> Unpublished document.



would tell me to ask him not to beat the child so much but to talk to him some and maybe that would help. I tried to tell him that myself but it didn't do any good. Why it was awful, he got so bad until he even hit me one night because I tried to stop him and that's when I told him that it could not go on any longer—it was too much.<sup>1</sup>

The area in which this family had lived since coming to Chicago has long been characterized by vice and crime. The area has deteriorated considerably and most of the Negroes in this area live in tenements and dilapidated two flats and frame buildings. During the little over five years that the family has been in Chicago, they have lived in five places in this same area. During this time the boy has been transferred from one school to another. The constant moving about in this area is characteristic of the families who live there. In the absence of an attractive home environment the boy spent most of his time in the streets. As we have noted before, this area lacks any form of neighborhood organization or communal life. The boy became a member, at first, of the play groups and later of an organized gang in the area and took over the patterns of delinquent behavior that characterized these groups.<sup>2</sup> It was in these groups rather than in the family group that the boy acquired his aims and conceptions of life. This was seen in the mother's report of the boy's opinion of one of the leaders of the gang of which he was a member.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> "There is sufficient material already available to indicate rather clearly that the spontaneous play group and the more highly organized gang are important factors in the problem of delinquency. In a study of six thousand stealing cases coming before the Juvenile Court of Cook County, it was found that in 90.4 per cent of the cases two or more boys were involved in the act. In many of these groups delinquency becomes a traditional form of behavior and is transmitted from the older to the younger members of the group" (Clifford R. Shaw, *The Jack-Roller* [Chicago, 1930], p. 10).

There is a bunch of boys that he runs around with and we can not keep him away from them. He told me that G—— C—— had a head on him of which any man would be proud. M—— says that boy can take a bunch of fellows in a store and walk up to the storekeeper and go to talking and those fellows can get anything they want. You see that's the bunch he ran into and we simply can't stop him now.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes, especially in this zone, the boy's delinquency not only reflected the criminal behavior that characterized this area but the criminal conduct of his parents. This was the situation in the case of a ten-year-old boy, who was first brought into court by his mother in 1924 because "he was beyond her control." About a year previously a foster grandmother had reported the boy's mother to the court for neglect of him and immoral conduct. As the result of the boy's truancy and desertion of the home in 1924 he was placed in the Parental School. In 1927, when the boy was thirteen, he was brought into the court on the charge of burglary. This charge had followed several other delinquencies, in the company of three other boys, and detention in the Cook County School twice and the Chicago Parental School several times.

A brief recital of some of the outstanding facts in the boy's family background will enable one to see how his delinquent and later criminal career grew out of the criminal behavior of his mother and stepfather.<sup>2</sup> His mother and father were married in New Orleans in 1911, and in 1913 came to Chicago where the boy was born the following year. Immediately after the family migrated to the city the father secured a job with a construction company. When he became ill the mother was forced to take in washing and iron-

<sup>1</sup> Unpublished document.

<sup>2</sup> In December, 1930, he was paroled the third time from St. Charles where he had been sent on each occasion for robbery.

ing and do day work. She placed the child with his foster grandmother. After the father recovered, the grandmother secured a court order requiring him to pay her \$10 for the child's support. But the father did not assume responsibility for the family and left the city. In 1923 the father was placed in a sanitarium where he died in March leaving the family without any money. The mother married again the following year. Soon after she was forced to work she discovered that she could find less laborious and more profitable means of making a living by selling narcotics and engaging in other criminal practices characteristic of this zone. When her trade in narcotics was broken up by the police, she wandered about the country to escape arrest. She was finally arrested in Chicago, but escaped imprisonment, according to her story, by paying out a large sum. She then began to sell liquor. When this was also broken up by the police, she began to sell "policy," a lottery scheme popular in some sections of the Negro community. The boy has been mixed up in his mother's criminal career helping her, especially, to sell "policy." The mother's attitude toward the boy's delinquency has been simply that her son should wait until he is older in order that he can carry on criminal practices in a more systematic way and escape detection. As she said: "If \_\_\_\_\_ (her son) would just wait awhile 'till he gets older, I would get him in the racket and we would all be settin' pretty. He is out with my policy books now and I don't know whether I am going to get them back or not."

The decline in delinquency for the last three zones at the southern end of the Negro community accompanied the progressive stabilization of family life, the decrease in social disorganization, and a growth in communal life. In the seventh zone from which boys were seldom brought into

the court and where there were only five arrests for delinquency in 1926, the large number of home-owning families representing the higher occupational classes in the Negro community have endeavored to keep the area free from disorder through their neighborhood organization. But the poorer and more disorganized families have gradually filtered in from the other areas and delinquency has been on the increase. In 1927 complaints were brought against sixteen boys and other signs of disorder had begun to appear.

Negroes in Chicago, as in many cities, contribute a disproportionate amount of juvenile delinquency. In the case of Chicago, juvenile delinquency among Negroes has been increasing especially since the World War. It has increased as Negroes have moved into those areas of Chicago which have been distinguished by a high rate of juvenile delinquency for a period of thirty years, in spite of marked changes in the racial composition of these areas during this period. This fact indicates the close relationship between the community situation and juvenile delinquency. This relationship was further emphasized by the fact that the rates of delinquency showed wide variations in the Negro community. It was high in the areas of deterioration where the poorer migrants from the South settled chiefly and in the area which was distinguished by crime, vice, and other forms of social disorganization. The rate of delinquency decreased considerably for the successive zones marking the expansion of the Negro community. In the seventh zone, where the higher occupational classes were concentrated and normal family groups occupied single-family houses, many of which they owned, juvenile delinquency in the Negro population tended to disappear. While the areas of high delinquency rates were differentiated from the areas



of low rates in regard to their physical character, the occupational status and the literacy of their inhabitants, home ownership, dependency, family desertion and non-support, and illegitimacy, these differences reflected fundamental differences in culture in the Negro group. For in no respect were these areas more sharply differentiated than in regard to family tradition, or in respect to the extent to which the culture of one generation was transmitted to the succeeding generation.



PART IV  
THE GROWTH OF TRADITIONS





## CHAPTER XI

### HOW FAMILY TRADITIONS ARE BUILT UP AMONG NEGROES

Negro life, in the last three chapters on family disorganization, appeared casual, precarious, and fragmentary. It lacked continuity and its roots went no deeper than the daily contingencies of urban life. Here and there among the population fading memories of relatives and life in the South were all that remained of a shattered social life. An unmarried mother, when asked concerning her family background, replied, "I ain't got no history," and tried vainly to recall relatives scattered in unknown parts of the country. The areas of family disorganization were differentiated from the areas in the Negro community of more stable family life. The statistics were indexes of the selective process that segregated the population according to underlying cultural differences. "It took me forty years to move from Dearborn Street to Grand Boulevard," said an old physician, whose mother was a washerwoman, to a young dentist struggling to maintain the standards of living of the class with which they were both identified. In the areas relatively free from family disorganization, Negro life was full of memories and was sometimes bound to the past by old traditions. In some cases these traditions went back to the Revolutionary War. "Members of my family have fought in every war, except the Mexican, from the Revolutionary to the World War," remarked a social worker with pride. There were memories and traditions bound up with the growth of the Negro community in the city. It was often the memory of ancestors

who were pioneers in some field of activity or had succeeded in winning recognition and a place in the community that formed the link between the successive generations. Among this class, whatever distinction in the Negro group has been acquired by occupation, wealth, or other achievement has become a slender, but important, social heritage that has been transmitted from generation to generation and given stability to life.

Upon what are these traditions founded? How have social distinctions originated in the Negro group? Of what do they consist? How has the Negro become a part of a moral order in which his personality has been fashioned? In what way has the tissue of this social life been propagated until it has become the basis of social control in the Negro group? These are some of the questions which we shall undertake to answer in the present chapter.

When the Negro was introduced into the strange world of the white man, memories of Africa soon faded and lost their meaning in his new environment. Contrasting the Negro's position with that of other races in America, Dr. Park says, "Other peoples have lost, under the disintegrating influence of the American environment, much of their cultural heritage. None have been so utterly cut off and estranged from their ancestral land, traditions and people."<sup>1</sup> Even the Negro's language ceased to bear any recollections of his homeland. The numerous dialects of broken tribes were soon supplanted by the English language which afforded the only means of communication with masters and fellow-slaves.<sup>2</sup> The slave's impulses were restrained by the social

<sup>1</sup> Robert E. Park, "The Conflict and Fusion of Cultures," *Journal of Negro History*, IV, 118.

<sup>2</sup> Guy B. Johnson, *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island, S.C.* (Chapel Hill, 1930), pp. 56-57.

order he found about him, and his desires and wishes reflected the new world of which he became a member.

Although the legal abstractions of the slave code took little account of human nature, they could not efface the personality of the slave. Sometimes the slave's conception of himself and his relationship to others were built upon the lingering memories of his status in Africa. A former slave wrote:

Indeed, old Ben, as my grandfather was called, had always expressed great contempt for his fellow slaves, they being, as he said, a mean and vulgar race, quite beneath his rank and the dignity of his former station. He had, during all the time that I knew him, a small cabin of his own, with about half an acre of ground attached to it, which he cultivated on his own account, and from which he drew a large portion of his subsistence.<sup>1</sup>

The division of labor on the plantation offered opportunities for the expression of individual talent. As Coppin relates, "Those who had musical talent often became 'fiddlers,' and some of them were considered quite expert with the bow."<sup>2</sup> Frederick Douglass has given us an account of the status of the different occupations among the slaves.

"Uncle" Tobey was the blacksmith, "Uncle" Harry the cartwright, and "Uncle" Abel was the shoemaker, and these had assistants in their several departments. These mechanics were called "Uncles" by all the younger slaves, not because they really sustained that relationship to any, but according to plantation etiquette as a mark of respect, due from the younger to the older slaves. Strange and even ridiculous as it may seem, among a people so uncultivated and with so many stern trials to look in the face, there is not to be found among any people a more rigid enforcement of the law of respect to elders than is

<sup>1</sup> Charles Ball, *Slavery in the United States. A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, A Black Man* (Lewistown, Pa., 1836), pp. 11-12.

<sup>2</sup> Bishop L. J. Coppin, *Unwritten History* (Philadelphia, 1920), p. 48.

maintained among them. I set this down as partly constitutional with the colored race and partly conventional.<sup>1</sup>

Among other slave notabilities, I found here one called by everybody, white and colored, "Uncle" Isaac Copper. Once in a while a negro had a surname fastened to him by common consent. This was the case with "Uncle" Isaac Copper. When the "Uncle" was dropped, he was called Doctor Copper. He was both our Doctor of Medicine and our Doctor of Divinity. Where he took his degree I am unable to say, but he was too well established in his profession to permit question as to his native skill, or attainments. One qualification he certainly had. He was a confirmed cripple, wholly unable to work, and was worth nothing for sale in the market. Though lame he was no sluggard. He made his crutches do him good service, and was always on the alert looking up the sick, and such as were supposed to need his aid and counsel. His remedial prescriptions embraced four articles. For diseases of the body, epsom salts, and castor oil; for those of the soul, the "Lord's prayer," and a few stout hickory switches.<sup>2</sup>

The preachers were probably the most influential personalities among the slaves. They became the interpreters of a religion which the slaves had developed on American soil. This religion was not, as many assume, a heritage from Africa.<sup>3</sup> Although the house-servants because of their favored position in relation to the master class were early admitted to the churches, it was only with the coming of the Methodists and Baptists that the masses of the slaves "found a form of Christianity that they could make their own."<sup>4</sup> The white ministers were never as close to the people as the black preachers. Anderson, an ex-slave, empha-

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, His Escape from Bondage, and His Complete History to the Present Time* (Chicago, 1882), p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> G. R. Wilson, "The Relation of the American Negro Slave: His Attitude toward Life and Death," *Journal of Negro History*, VIII, 41-71.

<sup>4</sup> Park, *op. cit.*, p. 119.



sizes the difference in services conducted by the white ministers and those under the leadership of their own ministers in their own way. He writes:

We people on the plantation had our church services the same as the white folks. We did not always have a church to hold our services in, but we usually had a preacher, and sometimes white preachers would hold services for us, to which special services all the colored folks were invited. Our preachers were usually plantation folks just like the rest of us. Some man who had a little education and had been taught something about the Bible would be our preacher. The colored folks had their own code of religion, not nearly so complicated as the white man's religion, but more closely observed. . . . When we had meetings of this kind, we held them in our own way and were not interfered with by the white folks.<sup>1</sup>

In the biography of a Negro preacher, who achieved some fame during his lifetime, we are able to follow the history of a slave family as it became integrated into the beginnings of institutional life among the slaves and transmitted this tradition to both slave and free descendants. This slave family was brought to Burke County, Georgia, in 1773 and kept in the master's family for several generations until emancipation. The father of the subject of the biography was his master's coachman, a position that indicated a certain amount of trust and carried distinction among the slaves. The coachman's two brothers were preachers in the Baptist church that was organized for the slaves before the Civil War. The freedom of one of these preachers was bought through the contributions of the congregation of the church over which he presided. The biographer shows how members of this family with a tradition of successful religious leadership became the pioneers in the efforts of the

<sup>1</sup> Robert Anderson, *From Slavery to Affluence: Memoirs of Robert Anderson, Ex-slave*, pp. 22-23.

emancipated Negroes to establish their religious and educational institutions, some of which bore their names.

As already shown, two of Dr. Walker's uncles—Joseph T. Walker and Nathan Walker—were ministers. The latter is still living, venerated and honored, at the good old age of 85. He was one of the founders of the Walker Baptist Association, and was for more than twenty years its moderator, retiring about ten years ago on account of the infirmities of old age. The Association was named in honor of the Rev. Joseph T. Walker. The Walker Baptist Institute at Augusta, named also for the Rev. Joseph T. Walker, was founded by this Association and has been for many years supported by it. In all respects the Walker Baptist Association is to-day the leading Association in Georgia. An older brother of Dr. Walker, the Rev. Peter Walker, now retired on account of age, was, in his day, a man of great force and power in the pulpit. A nephew of Dr. Walker, the Rev. Prof. Joseph A. Walker, son of Rev. Peter Walker, was up to the time of his death, about eight years ago, the honored and successful principal of Walker Baptist Institute. Besides these, there are two first cousins of Dr. Walker who are among Georgia's most distinguished clergymen—the Rev. W. G. Johnson, D.D., Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Macon, Ga., who is Secretary of the Walker Baptist Association, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Walker Baptist Institute, and a member of the Board of Trustees of the Atlanta Baptist College; and the Rev. R. J. Johnson, Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Millen, Ga., and Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of the Walker Baptist Institute. Other cousins in the ministry are the Rev. Samuel C. Walker, Augusta, Ga., Rev. A. J. Walker, Millen, Ga., Rev. T. W. Walker, Wrightsville, Ga., Rev. Solomon Walker, Savannah, Ga., Rev. Mathew Walker, Savannah, Ga., an elder in the C. M. E. Church, and Rev. Nathan Wilkerson, Waynesboro, Ga.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes it was the blood of the master class in his veins that gave the slave a higher conception of himself than that of the ordinary slave. The case of the slave woman who

<sup>1</sup> Silas Xavier Floyd, *Life of Charles T. Walker, D.D., The Black Spurgeon* (Nashville, Tenn., 1902), pp. 22-24.

complained to Frances Kemble was probably typical of the attitude of this class.

The mulatto woman, Sally, accosted me again today, and begged that she might be put to some other than field labor. Supposing she felt herself unequal to it, I asked her some questions, but the principal reason she urged for her promotion to some less laborious kind of work was, that hoeing in the field was so hard to her on "account of her color," and she therefore petitions to be allowed to learn a trade.<sup>1</sup>

The conception which mulatto slaves had concerning their place in the plantation economy was acquired partly as the result of the differential treatment accorded this group. They were usually the artisans and more especially the household servants. To be elevated to a position in the household carried with it certain distinctions of which the slave was not unconscious. "I was now made a house slave," writes an ex-slave, who adds, "My duties were to wait on the table and help in the kitchen. I was extremely glad of this promotion." Another ex-slave wrote, "Being a gentleman's body servant, I had nothing more to do with plantation affairs, and, consequently, thought myself much superior to those children who had to sweep the yard." Through contact in the household of the master,

a difference could be seen in appearance and general deportment. Often the house girl at the Big House was the lady at the quarters. She wore the cast-off clothing of her mistress. In many cases, where the mistress was kindly disposed, she took especial pride in dressing her maid in such finery as to place her above the common lot; or, to make her outshine all the neighborhood house girls.<sup>2</sup>

But more important than better dress and the distinction which dwelling in the master's household gave, was the op-

<sup>1</sup> Frances A. Kemble (Mrs. Butler), *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation*, pp. 193-94.

<sup>2</sup> L. J. Coppin, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

portunity that the slave had for acquaintance with a larger world. A Negro minister, a former slave, dated his intellectual awakening from listening to conversations as he waited table, which enabled him to learn "many things of which the field hands were entirely ignorant."<sup>1</sup> The advantages enjoyed by the house slaves were not lost when emancipation came. The small gains in culture became a social heritage that was transmitted in these families. Many Negro families of superior status take pride in the fact that their ancestors were "not treated as ordinary slaves" or were allowed opportunities for self-improvement that gave them a start in life. But let a representative of one of these families speak for himself.

My father came to Chicago from Kentucky with a drove of cattle in 1854 and got in with a man named Doc . . . and they contracted to buy a large piece of land. My father's master never treated him as an ordinary slave. He would trust him to drive his cattle into free territory and would give him a percentage of the sale. He went back to Kentucky and contracted to get his family. They had promised to let him have his family without charge but they made him buy them. He was afraid not to buy them as they would be sold South. He was compelled to pay \$4,000 for his family and was thus deprived of the means of buying land.<sup>2</sup>

It was from his father, whom he characterized as an "Old Roman" because of his strict discipline, that he caught the "vision" of escaping from the sloth and poverty of the masses and acquired the determination never to live in another man's house.

While the small gains made by the slaves in the acquisition of standards of behavior and culture have been trans-

<sup>1</sup> Francis Frederick, *Autobiography of Rev. Francis Frederick of Virginia* (Baltimore, 1869), p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Manuscript document.



mitted to their descendants, more frequently a distinct tradition in Negro families goes back to the founder of the family who fled from slavery and thereby asserted a love of freedom and independence that has become the basis of family pride. This was the case of a leading professional woman in Chicago who asserted:

I got my pride in my race and desire to do something for them and to be somebody from my grandfather who ran away from slavery in Virginia. I feel that those Negroes who were dissatisfied with slavery and desired to be free had more in them than those who stayed in slavery and accepted it. . . . He thirsted for his freedom until he ran away and went to Canada at the age of sixteen. He worked there and was a thrifty young man. The English people were not prejudiced to color, you know, so an English girl fell in love with my grandfather and they married. My father was born in 1837. That must have been along about 1830 that they married. There were ten children. My father was the fifth one. When he had finished his schooling—this was in Dresden—they lived in the country, and then they went to Amsterburg, Ontario, where he went to school. He finished his schooling and taught school for a while. He was determined to get a higher education. When he had sufficient funds he went to Detroit and submitted his credentials at the Medical College. Well, the next day, they handed his money back to him. They were very sorry as the Detroit School had so many students from the South that they thought it would create disorder if he should enter there. He said, "Well, I belong to a down trodden race, but I am determined to get a better education in order to help my people," and so he said, "If you will give me an opportunity of studying I will take any chance, even the chance of risking my life, in order to get my education." Well, the next day they took him in. They said if he had that much ambition and was that determined, they would let him matriculate there.<sup>1</sup>

After completing his medical course this woman's father went South and established a medical school for Negroes and became a leader of Negroes in their struggle to assert

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

their political rights. In choosing the profession of medicine the daughter of this pioneer among Negroes in the field of medicine, as well as his two sons, carried on the tradition established by their father.

It was chiefly among the free Negroes that traditions were built up in the Negro family. In many families, as in the foregoing case, the family tradition goes back to some ancestor who rebelled against slavery and secured his freedom either through flight or purchase. In other cases the tradition of free ancestry goes back many generations and, in the case of some families, there is no memory or record of slave ancestry. The wife of a prominent professional man in Chicago could trace six generations of free ancestry. The history of her family goes back to Charleston, South Carolina, where a full-blooded Indian woman bought a fine-looking Negro as soon as he was landed with the slave cargo and emancipated him in order that he could marry her daughter. The offspring of this pair, a daughter, had six children by a Scotchman. The story of her family continues:

When the mother of these six children died, the Scotchman, before marrying an old maid who was white, took his children before the altar of his church and acknowledged his paternity. My grandmother, S——, used to tell us that she remembered standing at the altar with her brothers and sisters. This Scotch old maid sewed and took care of the colored children as long as she lived, although they did not live at the same house with her. S——'s brother kept up his friendship with his father's relatives in Scotland and it was while on a visit there that he died. He is buried in a Scottish graveyard. One of these six children was my grandmother, S——. S—— fell in love with a slave by the name of C——. The old Indian great grandmother who ruled the whole family, including several generations, made C—— who married my grandmother buy his freedom before she would permit him to marry her great granddaughter. I have still, in my family, the document stating that my grandmother had always been free.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

Free ancestry and devotion to freedom have formed an important part in the memories and traditions which have been passed down in this family. Her story continues:

When grandmother S—— married C—— they went to live on a little farm outside of Charleston. They must have prospered for they seemingly had a good competence. A story has come down in our family exemplifying their devotion to the principles of human freedom. When grandmother S—— sold her first calf and was asked what she was going to do with the money, she said she was going to buy a female slave. Her husband, C——, was so set against slavery that he almost struck her. The family moved into the city of Charleston and conducted the largest tailoring establishment in the city. During the slavery agitation my grandfather was walking with his son one day down the street and a white man struck him with a cane. He had been insulted on several occasions but this was the last straw. They sold out everything and went to X (a northern city). Men, coming out of the South, came to the home of my widowed grandmother to pay their respects because they had learned their trade in the shop of my grandfather.<sup>1</sup>

The traditions of this family were the basis of the recognition which it received in the northern city to which it first migrated.

When I went to X, years later as a young lady, the X people recalled the wealthy southerners (my grand parents) who had come there because of their devotion to freedom. No amount of money could buy from me the determination on the part of my family for six generations to be free.<sup>2</sup>

And from the following we can see more clearly how the traditions of this family determined ultimately its status in the Negro community of a northern city, where a small group attempted to maintain certain traditions and standards of behavior.

In Y my people continued to uphold our traditions. We lived very much to ourselves and looked down upon the Y people as narrow

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

minded Yankees. The Y people regarded all mulatto women from the South as the illegitimate children of white men but in the case of our family we could boast of being legitimate.<sup>1</sup>

Small groups of families with some background of culture have formed the nucleus out of which standards have grown up and social control has been maintained in Negro communities. Sometimes a family in almost total isolation has fought valiantly to maintain its standards against the surrounding deluge of ignorance and debasement. From such a family came a school teacher, whose paternal and maternal grandparents were slaves who enjoyed certain educational advantages. Her father and mother, graduates of one of the missionary schools established for Negroes immediately after the Civil War, went to teach in a town in Georgia where her mother established a school. She gives the following account of her parent's experience in establishing the school and struggle in trying to maintain the traditions of the family.

Our life around M—— was very seclusive. Nowhere to go and nobody to associate with. We were taken away for the summer for vacation to see a little of the world. When my mother first established the school there was quite a bit of opposition. They thought it was at first a Congregational School and they sought to burn it down. She would have to sit up at night with a shawl around her shoulders to watch the buildings going up. Eventually a fire was started but some of the neighbors put it out. After it was erected they kept the children home—they were not going to have any "Congregations" in their families. The people in the community were mostly all Baptists. They said the Congregationalists were not Christians. Although the people there were thrifty and many of them owned their own homes, they had very low moral standards. Our mother and father kept us away from them. It caused hard feelings. We were not allowed to associate with the masses. There was a lot of factories there—canning factories and

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*



every child about fourteen years of age had to work. Every year about school time there would be so many illegitimate children born to these girls. My sister and I were the only two girls who didn't work there at the factory.<sup>1</sup>

Where these families have found a more congenial environment among other families of like culture, the traditions of the community have sustained and helped to perpetuate the gains which they have made in cultural development. In the comparatively large and economically well-off community of free people of color in Charleston, South Carolina, the careers of these families have been intertwined with the development of the institutional life. This is seen in the case of the family of Thomas S. Bonneau, a well-known colored teacher in that city, who, beginning in 1803, maintained a school for the free colored people for a quarter of a century. In every generation of his lineal descendants the teaching profession has been represented.<sup>2</sup> Many of these Charleston families have migrated or sent out representatives who have maintained the traditions of their families.

In some instances the migration of these free families has created centers of Negro culture in northern cities. This occurred in the case of the free mulatto families who migrated to Detroit from Virginia when they were deprived, during the slave controversy, of many of the privileges which they had enjoyed. One of the leading families among this group was that of Maria Louise Moore-Richards who was born in Fredericksburg, Virginia, in 1800.<sup>3</sup> Her parents were

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> C. W. Birnie, "The Education of the Negro in Charleston, S.C., before the Civil War," *Journal of Negro History*, XII, 18-19.

<sup>3</sup> W. B. Hartgrove, "The Story of Maria Louise Moore and Fannie M. Richards," *Journal of Negro History*, I, 23-33.

Edwin Moore, a Scotchman of Edinburgh, and a free woman of color who had been born in Toronto when it was called York. In 1820 Miss Moore was married to Adolph Richards, a mulatto native of the Island of Guadaloupe, who had been educated in London and had come to Virginia to improve his health. In adjusting himself to his new environment he opened a shop for wood-turning, painting, and glazing.

In Fredericksburg he had the respect and support of the best white people, passing as one of such well-to-do free Negroes as the Lees, the Cooks, the DeBaptistes who were contractors, and the Williamses who were contractors and brickmakers. His success was, in a large measure, due to the good standing of the family of Mrs. Richards and to the wisdom with which she directed this West Indian in his new environment.<sup>1</sup>

They had fourteen children, all of whom were given an education. A reaction against the teaching of Negroes caused the closing of colored schools.

Determined to have her children better educated Mrs. Richards sent one of her sons to a school conducted by Mrs. Beecham, a remarkable English woman, assisted by her daughter. These women were bent on doing what they could to evade the law interpreted as prohibiting any one from either sitting or standing to teach a black to read. They, therefore, gathered the colored children around them while they lay prostrate on the couch to teach them. For further evasion they kept on hand splinters of wood which they had the children dip into a match preparation and use with a flint for ignition to make it appear that they were showing them how to make matches. When this scheme seemed impracticable one of the boys was sent to Washington in the District of Columbia to attend the school maintained by John F. Cook, a successful educator and founder of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church. This young man was then running the risk of expatriation, for Virginia had in 1838 passed a law, prohibiting the return to that State of those Negroes who after the prohibition of their education had begun to attend schools in other parts.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

Because of these conditions, Mrs. Richards sold her property and moved to Detroit, Michigan, in 1851 when her husband died. The writer of this story says:

Some of the best white people commended her for this step, saying that she was too respectable a woman to suffer such humiliation as the reaction had entailed upon persons of her race. She was followed by practically all of the best free Negroes of Fredericksburg. Among these were the Lees, the Cooks, the Williamses, and the DeBaptistes. A few years later this group attracted the Pelham family from Petersburg.<sup>1</sup>

This colony found a congenial atmosphere in Detroit, where the Anti-Slavery Society, which was formed there in 1837, created a favorable attitude toward Negroes.

In this favorable community the Richards family easily prospered. The Lees well established themselves in their Northern homes and soon won the respect of the community. Most of the members of the Williams family confined themselves to their trade of bricklaying and amassed considerable wealth. One of Mr. William's daughters married a well-to-do Waring living then at Wauseon, Ohio, another became the wife of one Chappee, who is now a stenographer in Detroit, and the third united in matrimony with James H. Cole who became the head of a well-to-do family of Detroit. Then there were the Cooks descending from Lomax B. Cook, a broker of no little business ability. The DeBaptistes, too, were among the first to get a foothold in this new environment and prospered materially from their experience and knowledge acquired in Fredericksburg as contractors. From this group came Richard DeBaptiste, who in his day was the most noted colored Baptist preacher in the Northwest. The Pelhams were no less successful in establishing themselves in the economic world. They enjoyed a high reputation in the community and had the sympathy and cooperation of the influential white people in the city. Out of this family came Robert A. Pelham, for years editor of a weekly in Detroit, and from 1871 to the present time an employee of the Federal Government in Washington.<sup>2</sup>

The children of Mrs. Richards, according to the writer of their history, maintained the traditions and status of the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

family as indicated by their occupations and marriage connections. The most prominent among her children was a daughter, Fannie M. Richards, who became one of the best-known public-school teachers in Detroit. She was born in Fredericksburg in 1841 and, after coming with her family to Detroit, continued her education in Toronto. She returned to Detroit and opened a private school in 1863. In recognition of her work she was given a position in the colored public schools. When separate schools were abolished in 1871 she was transferred to a school where she remained until she was retired after distinguished services in 1915.<sup>1</sup>

Many members of this class of Negroes in northern cities viewed with alarm, as we have seen, the influx of the ignorant masses from the plantations into their communities. They saw their neighborhoods deteriorating and met racial barriers where none had existed before. Moreover, to them the migrants constituted a threat to the standards of behavior which they had safeguarded as a heritage. The community of interest and consciousness of cultural kinship among this class were responsible for such clubs as the Old Settlers Club in Chicago. An illuminating statement of the attitude of this class toward the newcomers was the general opinion expressed at one of the meetings of this club that all their achievements were being threatened by these "hordes of barbarians." But the very intensity of their pride in the small gains which they had made in civilization and sensitiveness concerning their status often kept them from seeing in the struggles of the ignorant masses the same painful steps by which their forefathers had achieved some small measure of culture.

The emergence of a small group of families with some

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.



background of culture and economic competence has tended to divide Negro communities, especially in southern cities, into two principal social classes. In a southern city, for example, the small social élite may be composed of a few school teachers, one or two physicians, a dentist, postal employees, and one or two other families who have acquired a superior status because of family, property, or sometimes because of some unique position in the white community. The composition of this class will vary according to the size, general culture, and history of the Negro community. This upper class has been held together by common standards of behavior and a certain consciousness of their superiority to the masses. It has grown as individuals have escaped from the ignorance, primitiveness, and economic dependence of the masses. There have been no well-established class traditions to define the behavior of this upper class.

The absence of traditions, growing out of occupational status to sustain and enrich the family traditions of those families which have risen above the masses, has been a weak point in the whole social structure of Negro life. The standards of the upper class have been taken over as far as possible from the wealthy whites. There has been an intense and fatuous struggle on the part of the members of this class to maintain the standards of living prescribed by the comparatively wealthy few among them. Slight improvement in economic status which has placed individuals in the upper class has often resulted in personal disorganization and attempts to maintain standards of living completely out of harmony with the general standards of similar occupational classes. For occupations in the Negro community do not have the same relative position, and do not give the same social status as similar occupations in the white community.

Hence the surprise of the white social worker that her Negro colleague was a "society" leader.

Only in rare instances does one find Negro families whose conceptions of life and modes of behavior have been fashioned by the traditions of the artisan class in our industrial society. In the case of the family from whose history the following excerpt is taken, we have a situation in which a Negro family had taken over the ideals, standards, and traditions of a white industrial group in which it had become almost completely assimilated. The young woman who furnished the history has often come into conflict with upper-class Negroes because of her tendency to identify herself with the laboring class of Negroes and her espousal of radical labor doctrines. Her family settled in a town in Pennsylvania where all her uncles, after their apprenticeships, plied their trades. Her father was

the outstanding stonemason and bricklayer of the town, surpassing even Bill Stompert (white) from whom he "stole" his trade. On excursions Father would take us to the houses he was building and to the bridges that were in process of construction and my youngest sister and I would be awestruck with the wonder of it all. Dad would allow us to climb in and about the houses and he would show us how to mix mortar, handle the trowels, etc. I remember how he used to love his tools and when folks would come to the house to borrow them, we wouldn't let anyone have them.

So it was very early that we acquired a deep and abiding respect for the people of the working class because we were and are part and parcel of them. We were taught early by both our parents to respect personality as it showed itself through constructive labor. The men (mostly white) who worked for Dad, the mechanics as well as the laborers, we thought of as constructive forces in the community. It was probably because of these ideas that we regarded with pride all the male members of the family.

The standard set by the Negro leaders in the community was, we thought, false. The inclination was to set on a pinnacle the Negroes

who were of the professional class. There weren't many, very few in fact, and probably because of this rarity there was much abject worship. You see Father and my uncles were all rated thruout as expert workmen and Mother who had learned the trade of hairdresser (that is the manufacture of hair ornaments) had enjoyed the reputation of the best worker in the finest shop in Pittsburgh, in her time. That was before her marriage.

Quite contrary to the custom of the town, our formal entertainment consisted only of our friends. We never entertained "celebrities," preachers and visitors for the sake of adding to the family prestige. It wasn't done in our family and I don't suppose ever thought of. Because our family on mother's side of the household was very well known and respected, our relationship with the élite of the white group was casual and usual. But although we were often in the homes of the most wealthy, Mother took care that our house which, while comfortably furnished, was in keeping with our economic status. It was simple but tastefully furnished. This was quite different from the standards prevailing among our Negro friends, who thought we were queer because we didn't imitate the houses of the wealthy in point of view of appointments. They also thought we were queer because we dressed in gingham and percales and wore flat but well made shoes and lisle stockings. I thought the G—— girls (wealthy white girls) were beautifully dressed, but there never was any envy in this admiration for Mother had always taught us that the important thing was to "dress within our means" and to look "clean" and "tidy." Even our Sunday clothes were simple and very often I have had to say when I was twitted about my simple clothes by other colored children, "well anyway my father is an expert mechanic and yours is nothing but a servant for white people," or "I am sure I look as well in my gingham as you look in satin." These statements always ended the arguments.

We did have a piano—and a very good one because mother thought that there should be entertainment in the house and she believed in the cultural influence of music. While many colored people had big houses, expensively furnished, we were the only "colored" children who belonged to the private library. There was no public one and mother had to pay for cards. We always had three cards, one for each two of us. As to politics, I can remember only that father thought a man was a good candidate if he sympathized with the aims and aspira-

tions of the working class group. I remember him voting against J—— for mayor because he owned the H—— Coal mine and didn't allow the union to enter and forced his employees to buy at the company store. Discussions outside of the house between father and his friends who were mainly white mechanics, we listened to and I believe my interest in the proletariat was generated in these early years.

We have often laughed at what mother called the "antics" of the J——'s. They had recently become wealthy and I suppose their emulation, inaccurate as it was, of the old wealthy group reminded us of the same sort of thing among the Negro working class. Their striving, we thought ridiculous and somehow we always knew when Mrs. J. was "trying to get in" with the D——'s (the élite) or changing her house furnishings to look like theirs. We always knew, too, that Mrs. S——, the Negro barber's wife, was dressing well to look like A—— D——, and was buying curtains "exactly like the G——'s." Our home although distinctive was much like that of father's friends.<sup>1</sup>

The rapid changes, which have taken place in the economic status of the Negro group through migrations to cities, have brought about greater occupational differentiation of the group. This differentiation has progressed much farther in the large cities of the North than in southern or even border cities.<sup>2</sup> This has been due to many factors, chief among them a less impregnable color line, possession of political power, and varied industrial opportunities. In many cases the mulatto, especially, has acquired an unusual occupational status because of the anonymity of urban life. As the different occupational classes grow in size and significance, they are developing their own traditions and modes of behavior. For example, the wife of a teacher who migrated to a northern city remarked, with satisfaction, that in her new location she was able to become identified

<sup>1</sup> Manuscript document.

<sup>2</sup> E. F. Frazier, "Occupational Classes among Negroes in Cities," *American Journal of Sociology*, XXXV, 726-27.



with a group on her own economic level and was relieved of the struggle to maintain the standard of living set by a few wealthy members of the small colored élite in the southern city. The emergence of these occupational classes is thereby creating groups with common aims and common interests, which are beginning to give the Negro new conceptions of life and to exercise control over his behavior.

In a large city like Chicago, where rapid changes in the economic and social status of the Negro group are taking place on a large scale, the process by which individuals escape from the great masses and acquire a new status appears in sharp outlines. At the present time, as in the past, pioneering in some field where Negroes have never entered, or some unique achievement, becomes a mark of distinction that immediately gives the individual a new status. The high-school boy, whose parents were a few years previously croppers in the South, wins an oratorical contest or becomes valedictorian of his class and becomes the center of national as well as local attention. Or one who receives a unique appointment as the result of a civil service examination acquires over night a reputation that is heralded over the country by the Negro press. These distinctions determine largely the future rôle that the individual will play in the Negro group. It is remarkable how often one learns from the history of Negro families that the first or only Negro in some occupation has been the fountain head of the family tradition.

The world of the city is a destroyer, as well as a builder, of traditions. Negroes of the older generations who have carefully safeguarded the moral and cultural gains of their group hear their children cynically dub these values puritanical or bourgeois or philistine. But the breakdown of the

sentimental attachment to those things which the older generation has held sacred is often the beginning of an intellectual or an artistic tradition. The ideals and outlook on life of the small class which differentiated itself from the great illiterate masses in the past cannot encompass the aims and hopes of an awakened race whose interests coincide with the whole range of human interests.

The awakening of the Negro group in the city means the development of race consciousness. Conflict with other racial groups and increasing literacy is forcing this racial consciousness deeper into the masses. While the Negro child in the South accepts without resentment or is unconscious of the dispraise which standard textbooks bestow upon his race, his brother in the northern city reports even unintended disparagement of his group to his parents. Increasingly, the achievements of individuals are deriving their significance from their relation to the common ideals and purposes of the group. These ideals and achievements tend to enrich the fund of traditions which become the social heritage transmitted from generation to generation. These ideals and conceptions of life determine whether one will marry or remain single, have children or maintain a certain standard of life, endure an unhappy married life for the sake of his social status or change mates for the fulfilment of a career. This is the social matrix in which the Negro family is ever taking form and developing.

## CHAPTER XII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the first chapter of this study we found that opinions extending over a long period had been unanimous concerning the widespread demoralization of Negro family life. These opinions came from observers and students with diverse interests and were supported by statistics from many sources. For all except one or two of these observers this widespread demoralization of family life was a sign of the inability of the Negro to measure up to the sex standards of Western civilization and to a few it portended the ultimate extinction of the race.

Many attempts have been made to give an adequate explanation of the continued low standards of sex morals among the masses of Negroes in spite of the general progress of the race in the accumulation of wealth and in overcoming illiteracy. To some students the persistence of family disorganization was due to the natural impulses of the Negro which, acquired through natural selection during his long residence in Africa, broke through all forms of social control of sex conduct. Others thought that the general demoralization of family life was simply the loose morals of African savages which had been transmitted to America. There were still others who thought that slavery had only partially removed the burden of savage licentiousness. One Negro writer regarded slavery as purely a demoralizing influence, which had robbed the Negro of his African customs without supplying any in their place.

All of these explanations appeared to be inadequate or

erroneous because they were based upon certain untenable assumptions. The picture of the African ancestors of the Negro as a child of nature with unrestrained passions seemed to reflect certain discarded conceptions of primitive man which had been current at one time. The assumption that the African sex mores had been transplanted to America seemed highly improbable, when one considered the diverse cultural backgrounds from which slaves were brought to America and the destruction of all tribal life which began even before the Negro entered his new environment. In the absence of any indisputable evidence that specific cultural traits had become established in America, one was forced to the conclusion that the Negro's African background could not be responsible for his sex behavior in America. While slavery undoubtedly destroyed the African family systems, some sort of Negro family life developed under slavery, especially where the institution became a settled way of life.

Whatever stability and continuity of family life had developed under slavery tended to dissolve during the crisis of emancipation when the Negro slave family crumbled with the social organization that had supported it. While some of the gains in the acquisition of Western standards of family life were preserved by the former slaves, the progress which has been made in the development of stable family relations has rested largely upon the foundations of family traditions developed among the free Negroes who numbered nearly a half million at the time of emancipation. After the Civil War the masses of Negroes settled down and became accommodated to a modified form of plantation life. The increase in farm- and home-ownership since the Civil War has been an indication of the progressive stabilization of life.



Since the closing years of the last century the urbanization of the Negro population has proceeded at a rapid rate. The migration of Negroes to cities has tended to concentrate in urban areas large numbers of demoralized Negroes who have furnished the statistics for crime, illegitimacy, and broken homes. During and since the World War the Negro has migrated chiefly to the large industrial areas of the North. The demoralization of Negro life in these large cities has forced itself upon the attention of students, social workers, and municipal authorities.

In seeking a measure of the changes which are taking place in the Negro family as the result of the urbanization of the population, one turns naturally to the census. The census figures indicate changes in the marital status of the Negro, as, for example, the increase in the percentage of married and divorced persons. Among the important changes have been the increase in home ownership, the decrease in the average size of the family, and the smaller proportion of adults married in urban as compared with rural areas. These statistics, as we have seen, covered up the wide and fundamental cultural differences in the Negro population and gave a picture of average conditions. For example, marriage, widowhood, and divorce have a different meaning for the plantation Negro from what they have for the Negro in Chicago. Moreover, these statistics for the Negro in the mass failed to give any indication of the disorganization and reorganization of life which is constantly taking place in the Negro population. But it was through an understanding of these processes by which the family life of a small but significant group was becoming stabilized that one could see the widespread demoralization of Negro life in its proper perspective. Therefore, the problem was to

break up the Negro population into small enough units so that these processes could be measured.

The statistics on the Negro population taken as a homogeneous group in Chicago failed to give any clues to the important changes in the status of family life which the migrations had occasioned. The migration of the Negro to the city produced in his life a crisis similar to that produced by emancipation. It meant the loss of friends and old associations; the breakdown of the customary forms of social control; awakening of new hopes and ambitions; and sometimes disillusionment. Life acquired a new meaning for the Negro. He was introduced into a strange world where he was forced to compete for a place and where there were infinite means of realizing his new desires and hopes. Some succeeded better than others, and success was reflected in a new status not only in the world at large but in the Negro community.

However, when the statistics on the family life of the Negro were related to unit areas which coincided with the expansion of the Negro community, they became an index to the changes in the economic and social status of the population. The location and expansion of the Negro population in relation to the organization and growth of the city have been similar to that of other cultural and racial groups in the city. Negroes first secured a foothold in the deteriorating areas just outside of the business and financial center, or the Loop. The growth of the Negro community has been bound up with the growth of the city. It has expanded mainly along State Street or one of the main thoroughfares radiating from the center of the city and running parallel with trunk lines entering the city.

In the expansion of the Negro community, just as in the

growth of the larger community of Chicago, there has been a process of selection and segregation of different elements in the population. From the beginning of the Negro community the more thrifty and energetic inhabitants have tended to move out from the masses. The successive waves of southern migrants who have come to Chicago have settled chiefly in the most deteriorated areas occupied by Negroes. As individuals among them have secured a foothold in the city and improved their economic status they have moved out from the areas where the poorer inhabitants lived. When the influx from the lower South, during the war period, of large numbers of migrants overcrowded the poorer sections of the Negro community and changed the character of the better neighborhoods, the better elements sought a congenial environment beyond the old limits of the area occupied by Negroes. While this process had formerly taken place quietly, the sudden expansion of the Negro community brought about conflicts with the whites and culminated in the race riots of 1919.

The relative proportion of individuals of the higher occupational classes in the population of the successive zones was found to be a measure of the processes of selection and segregation which have accompanied the expansion of the Negro community. Occupational status became an index to the success which individuals had achieved in the severe competition which characterizes urban life. Increase in home ownership, another index of this success and at the same time an indication of stable family life, was correlated with the increase in the proportion of higher occupational classes in the successive zones. Likewise, the marital status of the Negro population in the seven zones varied according to the stabilization of family life. In the areas of more stable fam-

ily life there was a larger portion of the men married, fewer young women married, and fewer divorced and widowed persons. In the better areas there were more normal family groupings, fewer broken homes, and fewer lodgers in the families. Differences in the family life of the Negro in these zones were also shown in regard to the number of children in the family. Although the families in the poorer areas nearest the center of the city showed the effects of migration by the comparatively few young children, there were more children in these families than in those in the demoralized area of the Negro community. In this area, which was related to the Negro community as the business area and adjacent deteriorated areas are related to the larger urban community, Negro family life tended to disappear. This was the area of crime and vice and free relations. There were few families with children, and many men and women, who had broken all family ties, were living in rooming and lodging houses. The progressive stabilization of family life, which accompanied the selection and segregation of the better elements in the Negro community, was marked by the increase in the average size of the family. Although the average size of the family in better areas was smaller than for the country as a whole there were proportionately more children than in the broken families from the South. In an outlying home-owning community the size of the family approached most nearly to that of the country as a whole.

Family disorganization measured by dependency, desertion, illegitimacy, and juvenile delinquency varied according to the economic organization and social structure of the Negro community. In the poorer areas where the migrants settled, the high rate of dependency was accompanied by high rates of family desertion, illegitimacy, and juvenile delinquency. The youth of many of the unmarried mothers



indicated, as in the case of juvenile delinquency, the breakdown of family discipline as well as community organization. The decrease in all three forms of family disorganization in the successive zones coincided with the progressive selection of the more stable elements in the Negro population.

The variations, which these statistics showed when they were related to the organization of the Negro community, reflected fundamental cultural differences in the Negro population. In the case of large numbers of southern migrants who came to the city, the customary and sympathetic bonds that had held families together in the rural communities of the South were dissolved when they were no longer supported by the neighborhood organization and institutions of the rural southern communities. Many had become disorganized in their wanderings before coming to Chicago. These families possessed no family traditions to bind the generations together and give continuity to life. On the other hand, in the better areas there had always been a small nucleus of families with some culture who had maintained standards and passed on to their children some social heritage. In some cases these families had the advantage of free ancestry. In other cases family traditions had been established by ancestors who had succeeded in accumulating property, or education, or had acquired some distinction that had given them status in their community. Accessions to this small group of families had constantly come through the more intelligent and energetic members of the Negro group who had succeeded in acquiring a higher status in the Negro population. While the city tended to dissolve established forms of social life and brought about disorganization, it had created an opportunity for more to escape from the condition of the masses. Many of those who had become emancipated from the old conceptions of life and had ac-

quired new hopes and ambitions enriched the social heritage for succeeding generations.

The widespread disorganization of Negro family life must be regarded as an aspect of the civilizational process in the Negro group. It is not merely a pathological phenomenon. The stability of family relations, which one finds among the isolated peasant groups in the rural communities of the South, is not the same kind of stability which is achieved by the families in the areas of the Negro community in Chicago. In the latter case the Negro has learned to live in a more complex world. As the Negro is brought into contact with a larger world through increasing communication and mobility, disorganization is a natural result. The extent of the disorganization will depend upon the fund of social tradition which will become the basis for the reorganization of life on a more intelligent and more efficient basis. Some loss must be sustained in the process. In the large cities of the North, where competition is severe and family life in some sections of the population tends to disappear, a part of the population will die out. There will be a quantitative loss even among those who succeed in acquiring a relatively high status. This seems to be the inevitable price which the Negro must pay for civilization. But survival in the civilization in which the Negro finds himself will depend upon efficiency as much as upon numbers. Unless artificial barriers are raised to nullify the influence of efficiency in the competitive process, increased efficiency will mean greater participation in the communal life. This greater participation will bring the Negro, as we have seen in the case of Chicago, ever widening conceptions of life which will become embodied in the common traditions and aims and purposes of his group.

## APPENDIXES





## APPENDIX A

### A NOTE ON THE METHOD OF THE STUDY

Since this study represents, on the whole, a departure from the usual approach in studying the Negro, it has seemed advisable to add a note concerning its point of view and the methods which have been employed in its prosecution. The majority of studies of Negro life have taken the Negro group as an undifferentiated mass and compared it in respect to crime, poverty, delinquency, family disorganization, etc., with the white group. These comparisons, which have usually indicated a greater amount of social disorganization in the Negro group than in the white population, have often furnished occasions for defensive statements on the part of Negro leaders and offered a sort of confirmation of the views of some white critics that the Negro lacked the moral qualities required for survival in Western civilization.

The assumption of the present study has been that the career of the Negro in America has not only brought about considerable social disorganization but has created wide differences in cultural development which are obscured by treating Negroes as a homogeneous group. While the emancipation of the slaves and the urbanization of the Negro population during the past four decades, which culminated in the northward migrations, have tended to destroy whatever stability in family and other social relations the Negro has been able to achieve, these crises have offered an opportunity for the more intelligent and efficient elements in the population to escape from the traditional status of the masses and acquire a higher level of culture. Therefore, it has seemed that the important problem in studying the Negro is to discover and get a measure, if possible, of the process by which these small elements succeed in escaping from the condition of the masses. This could be done only by breaking up the Negro population into small enough units so that social and cultural differences could become distinguishable.

The spatial pattern, which the distribution of these small units of the population presents, coincides with the economic and cultural organization of the Negro community. The economic organization of

the Negro community arises from the increasing occupational differentiation of the population and the competition among its members, and furnishes the basis of the social and cultural organization. The family, a constituent element of this social and cultural organization, embodies and reflects the varying mores and folkways of the community. Therefore, in order to test the hypothesis: namely, *that the disorganization and reorganization of Negro family life are part of the processes of selection and segregation of those elements in the Negro population which have become emancipated from the traditional status of the masses*, the family was studied in its relation to the economic and cultural organization of the community.

A combination of several circumstances made the Negro community in the city of Chicago an ideal place to test the validity of this hypothesis. In the first place, the Negro population which has increased rapidly with the growth of the city is a cross-section of the Negro population in America. It represents descendants of both the slave and the free population, and includes families accustomed to long residence in northern and southern cities as well as a large group of those fresh from the plantations of the South. Still more important for the successful prosecution of this study were the research facilities and resources offered by the Local Community Research Laboratory at the University of Chicago. This laboratory furnished statistical data on the Negro population for small areas, thus making it possible to relate indexes of family life to the selection and segregation of significant elements in the Negro population. Moreover, studies,<sup>1</sup> which had been carried on in connection with the laboratory, served as models and showed the fruitful results of the approach and methods represented in this study. The analysis of the standpoint and method of these studies by Kimball Young makes it unnecessary to do more than indicate the main factors in the approach of the present study.<sup>2</sup> Our approach involves chiefly three factors: the ecological, the social psychological, and the study of social organization and social control.

<sup>1</sup> Chief among these studies are Zorbaugh's *The Gold Coast and the Slum*; Mowrer's *Family Disorganization*; Cavan's *Suicide*; and papers edited by R. E. Park and E. W. Burgess in *The City*; and *The Urban Community* edited by E. W. Burgess.

<sup>2</sup> See *Methods in Social Science*, edited by Stuart A. Rice (Chicago, 1931), pp. 511-25. Analysis 37: "Frederick M. Thrasher's Study of Gangs," by Kimball Young.

A more detailed account is necessary concerning the method of investigation. The use of statistical data from the federal census has been made clear in the text. Nor will it be necessary to comment on the statistical data on juvenile delinquency, since they were taken from the records of the Institute for Juvenile Research and Clifford Shaw has shown in his studies, especially *Delinquency Areas*, the nature and source of this material. But comment is necessary concerning the statistics on desertions and illegitimacy. The question may be asked: Are these all true cases of desertion? In view of what we have noted concerning the extent to which social workers are able to verify marriages of Negro migrants and the meager information we have about the marital condition of the rural Negro population, it seems reasonable to assume that in many so-called cases of desertion the men and women involved had not been married. But these facts do not vitiate the value of these statistics as indexes to the dissolution of marital and family ties. They remain a measure of the social disorganization that takes place in the changing environment of the city. A pertinent question concerning the illegitimacy rates based upon the hospital cases is whether these cases represent a selected group. In answer to this question it may be stated that Negro births in the hospital come from all sections of the Negro community and constitute from a third to nearly a half of all Negro births in the city. More specifically, these illegitimate births constitute the social problem of illegitimacy as it concerns social agencies.

A more important consideration for our discussion of the methods of this study is concerned with the collection and analysis of family histories and other documentary materials. First, how were these documents obtained? A large number of those secured from the poorer and often illiterate migrants were stenographic reports of statements by persons interviewed when applying to the Chicago Urban League for jobs and other forms of assistance. In some cases the persons who were interviewed knew that their statements were being recorded, and in other cases they were unaware of this fact. Documents were secured in a similar manner through visits to the homes of residents in the different areas. Where it was not possible to make stenographic records of the stories told by the persons interviewed, the investigator wrote out from memory immediately after the interview, sometimes with and sometimes without the assistance of notes, the account which had been given him. The interviews which were secured through

the co-operation of the Court of Domestic Relations were recorded stenographically.

The documents secured on illegitimacy are the results of more extended interviews. Through contacts with unmarried mothers in a special class under the supervision of the board of education, it was possible to secure documents written by these unmarried mothers themselves as well as the records of interviews taken down stenographically.

Among the educated classes, the matter of securing documentary materials presented a somewhat different problem. While one would normally expect these more articulate groups to be more inclined to write their family- and life-histories, it was possible only in a very few cases to secure documents written by the persons themselves. Moreover, favorable situations for securing these materials did not present themselves as readily as in the case of dependent and illiterate persons. Therefore, in most instances it was necessary to secure information through interviews in the same manner as in the case of the less literate classes. On the whole, however, members of the educated classes responded generously in the giving of information and in many cases offered intelligent and valuable co-operation. There was, of course, some objection on the part of some to being studied.

The general value of life-history documents for sociological research has been thoroughly discussed by Dr. Burgess in *The Jack-Roller*.<sup>1</sup> There has also been a general recognition of the value of "letters, autobiographies, sympathetic interviews, social case records based on personal investigation," in studying persons in interaction and the subjective aspect of culture. The documents which have been collected for the present study are of the same character and possess the same value as the documentary data commented on above. They afford us an insight into the meaning of the world to the migrant, the old settler, or the *nouveau riche* in the Negro community. We get a picture of the social and cultural world in which the Negro lives and through this means his behavior becomes intelligible. Through the same means we are able to see the development of the Negro family in relation to social organization and social control. Thus the personality and behavior of the Negro appear in a definite cultural context, and he no longer remains an abstraction in a vacuum as most studies have presented him.

<sup>1</sup> See Clifford Shaw, *The Jack-Roller* (Chicago, 1930), pp. 184-97, "Discussion," Ernest W. Burgess.



# APPENDIX B

## SUPPLEMENTARY STATISTICAL TABLES

TABLE I

WHITE AND NEGRO BIRTHS PER 1,000 POPULATION FOR THE  
BIRTH REGISTRATION AREA, 1921-27

AREA	RATE PER 1,000 POPULATION						
	Births (Exclusive of Stillbirths)						
	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921
The birth registration area in continental United States.....	20.6	20.6	21.4	22.6	22.4	22.5	24.3
White.....	20.2	20.3	21.1	22.2	22.1	22.2	24.0
Colored.....	25.0	26.2	26.7	27.4	26.3	26.0	27.9
Urban.....	20.9	21.2	21.9	22.8	22.3	22.2	24.0
White.....	20.6	20.9	21.7	22.5	22.2	22.1	23.9
Colored.....	25.5	26.3	27.0	27.6	25.2	23.7	25.4
Rural.....	20.4	20.1	20.9	22.4	22.5	22.8	24.7
White.....	19.9	19.6	20.5	21.9	22.0	22.4	24.2
Colored.....	24.7	26.1	26.5	27.2	26.9	27.3	29.2

TABLE II

AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS TO THE FAMILY IN THE TOTAL  
POPULATION AND THE NEGRO POPULATION AT EACH  
DECENNIAL CENSUS, 1890-1910

CENSUS YEAR	PERSONS TO A FAMILY			
	United States	North	South	West
1890:				
Total population....	4.9	4.8	5.3	4.9
Negro population...	5.3	4.9	5.4	5.3
1900:				
Total population....	4.7	4.6	5.0	4.4
Negro population...	4.8	4.6	4.8	4.4
1910:				
Total population....	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.3
Negro population...	4.5	4.2	4.6	4.0

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TABLE III

\* Based upon annual reports of births, stillbirths, and infant mortality for the Birth Registration Area, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C.  
† Statistics for these years include all colored. ‡ Exclusive of California and Massachusetts. § Less than five illegitimate births.  
|| In 1920, 1921, 1922, the birth certificates of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont did not require this information but sometimes it was given. In 1923 the birth certificates of Maine did not require this information but sometimes it was given.

§ Less than five illegitimate births.

|| In 1920, 1921, 1922, the birth certificates of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont did not require this information but sometimes it was given. In 1923 the birth certificates of Maine did not require this information but sometimes it was given.

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE NEGRO POPULATION FIFTEEN YEARS  
 OF AGE AND OVER ACCORDING TO MARITAL STATUS  
 IN UNIT AREAS, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 1920

UNIT AREA		SINGLE		MARRIED		WIDOWED		DIVORCED	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
SOUTH SIDE	12th Street-----	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
	22d Street-----	38.6	16.4	52.1	64.2	6.3	18.2	0.7	0.9
	32d Street-----	38.1	16.0	54.4	63.3	6.3	19.4	0.8	0.9
	39th Street-----	35.9	16.9	55.8	61.0	7.2	20.3	0.7	1.4
	47th Street-----	32.0	17.1	61.1	63.6	4.9	17.0	1.4	2.0
	55th Street-----	30.7	17.4	62.5	60.6	5.5	20.1	0.9	1.5
	63rd Street-----	27.3	16.8	65.6	64.6	6.1	17.3	0.9	1.8
	67th Street-----	24.7	17.1	68.5	63.4	5.5	18.2	1.2	1.1
		---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Roseland.....		22.8	25.9	77.1	70.1	0	3.9	0	0
Morgan Park.....		23.2	15.4	70.0	69.2	5.6	14.9	0.8	0.4
Englewood.....		24.4	19.5	70.6	65.3	4.3	14.6	0.4	0.4
Near West Side.....		29.4	19.2	62.8	65.9	6.6	13.0	1.0	1.8
Lower North Side.....		32.8	22.1	64.0	50.6	2.2	25.3	0.7	1.9



TABLE V

HOME OWNERSHIP AMONG NEGROES IN FIFTY-FOUR CENSUS TRACTS  
ACCORDING TO UNIT AREAS IN CHICAGO, 1920

Census Tracts and Unit Areas		Number of Families	Number of Homes Owned	Percentage of Homes Owned in Tracts	Percentage of Homes Owned in Area
SOUTH SIDE	12th Street				
	301.....	91	0	0	0
	302.....	444	0	0	
	303.....	29	0	0	
	22d Street				
	304.....	455	0	0	1.2
	305.....	47	0	0	
	321.....	234	2	0.8	
	333.....	340	3	0.9	
	334.....	1410	8	0.5	
	335.....	562	24	4.2	
	336.....	574	9	1.5	
	32d Street				
	328.....	22	0	0	6.2
	337.....	926	70	7.5	
	338.....	874	17	1.9	
	339.....	910	91	10.0	
	340.....	509	52	10.2	
	341.....	1474	18	1.2	
	342.....	861	30	3.4	
	343.....	861	143	16.6	
	344.....	1352	78	5.7	
	394.....	589	24	4.0	
	396.....	30	0	0	
	39th Street				
	382.....	479	2	0.4	7.2
	383.....	737	31	4.2	
	384.....	1019	117	11.4	
	385.....	547	9	1.6	
	386.....	732	55	7.5	
	387.....	317	54	17.0	
	399.....	663	55	8.3	
	47th Street				
	388.....	668	34	5.0	8.3
	389.....	266	12	4.5	
	390.....	74	15	20.3	
	391.....	218	14	6.4	
	392.....	14	5	35.7	
	393.....	485	61	12.6	
	432.....	704	54	7.7	
	433.....	244	26	10.7	

TABLE V—*Continued*

Census Tracts and Unit Areas		Number of Families	Number of Homes Owned	Percentage of Homes Owned in Tracts	Percentage of Homes Owned in Area
SOUTH SIDE— <i>Cont.</i>	55th Street-----				
	434.....	442	64	14.5	
	435.....	179	26	14.6	
	436.....	72	1	1.4	11.4
	437.....	164	9	5.5	
	63rd Street-----				
	446.....	350	102	29.1	
	449.....	47	14	29.8	29.8
	450.....	20	8	40.0	
	71st Street-----				
Roseland					
	481.....	60	47	78.3	78.3
Morgan Park					
	492.....	189	139	73.5	73.5
Englewood					
	407.....	322	79	24.5	
	417.....	63	20	31.6	25.1
	419.....	108	25	23.1	
Lower North Side					
	88.....	75	0	0	0
	91.....	36	0	0	
Near West Side					
	222.....	417	20	4.8	
	223.....	619	21	3.4	3.1
	224.....	597	15	2.5	
	225.....	194	1	0.5	
Total.....		23,715	1,704	.....	7.2

TABLE VI

AVERAGE NUMBER OF NEGROES AND NEGRO FAMILIES PER DWELLING;  
 AVERAGE SIZE OF NEGRO FAMILIES AND NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER  
 FIFTEEN YEARS, UNDER FIVE YEARS, AND UNDER ONE YEAR TO 100  
 NEGRO FEMALES FIFTEEN TO FORTY-FOUR YEARS, IN UNIT AREAS,  
 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, 1920

UNIT AREA	AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS PER DWELLING	AVERAGE NUMBER OF FAMILIES PER DWELLING	AVERAGE SIZE OF FAMILY	NUMBER OF CHILDREN TO 100 FEMALES FIFTEEN TO FORTY- FOUR YEARS		
				Under 15	Under 5	Under 1
SOUTH SIDE	12th Street -	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	22d Street -	10.5	2.6	3.8	70.7	19.8
	32d Street -	8.7	2.0	4.2	49.9	17.6
	39th Street -	9.1	2.0	4.4	42.8	14.3
	47th Street -	8.9	2.0	4.3	48.6	17.3
	55th Street -	8.0	1.9	4.1	59.5	20.0
	63rd Street -	7.5	1.8	4.0	69.4	26.9
	71st Street -	7.1	1.8	3.7	74.1	27.6
Roseland . . . . .	3.6	1.0	3.4	95.1	25.8	3.2
Morgan Park . . .	3.9	1.1	3.6	115.4	28.4	7.7
Englewood . . . . .	6.0	1.7	3.7	95.0	24.3	7.9
Near West Side . .	6.9	1.7	3.9	70.4	20.1	6.1
Lower North Side	7.3	2.5	2.9	31.2	8.7	0

TABLE VII

DISTRIBUTION OF UNITED CHARITIES CASES, FAMILY DESERTIONS, AND NON-SUPPORT AMONG NEGROES IN CENSUS TRACTS ACCORDING TO UNIT AREAS IN CHICAGO

CENSUS TRACTS AND UNIT AREAS		UNITED CHARITIES CASES, 1927		FAMILY DESERTIONS CASES JANUARY 1, 1926, TO JUNE 30, 1928		ARRESTS FOR NON- SUPPORT, 1927	
		Number	Total	Number	Total	Number	Total
SOUTH SIDE	12th Street -						
	301....	6		2		1	
	302....	16	28	3	9	7	9
	303....	6		4		1	
	22d Street -						
	304....	22		3		9	
	305....	9		1		2	
	321....	22		5		5	
	333....	24	317	12	100	7	79
	334....	108		41		25	
	335....	77		23		22	
	336....	55		15		9	
	32d Street -						
	328....	2		3		2	
	337....	40		13		25	
	338....	42		9		16	
	339....	34		18		21	
	340....	22		14		8	
	341....	71	389	24	154	18	166
	342....	32		12		16	
	343....	27		14		13	
	344....	61		23		25	
	394....	55		19		22	
	396....	3		5		0	
	39th Street -						
	382....	34		16		7	
	383....	31		23		38	
	384....	70		33		44	
	385....	33	242	11	132	20	199
	386....	23		18		39	
	387....	22		13		25	
	399....	20		18		26	



TABLE VII—*Continued*

CENSUS TRACTS AND UNIT AREAS		UNITED CHARITIES CASES, 1927		FAMILY DESERTIONS CASES JANUARY 1, 1926, TO JUNE 30, 1928		ARRESTS FOR NON- SUPPORT, 1927	
		Number	Total	Number	Total	Number	Total
SOUTH SIDE	47th Street	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	388....	29	154	21	88	7	125
	389....	25		12		24	
	390....	9		7		17	
	391....	16		11		11	
	392....	7		1		14	
	393....	24		9		15	
	432....	29	30	16	11	19	15
	433....	22		11		32	
	55th Street	-----		-----		-----	
	434....	10		3		3	
	435....	5		3		5	
	436....	4		2		6	
	437....	11		3		1	
	63rd Street	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	446....	21		5		10	
	67th Street	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Roseland		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	481....	12	.....	2	.....	0	.....
Morgan Park		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	492....	55	.....	14	.....	13	.....
Englewood		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	407....	16	25	10	10	4	6
	417....	4		0		2	
	419....	5		0		0	
Lower North Side		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	88....	18	22	9	10	3	3
	91....	4		1		0	
Near West Side		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	222....	29	151	16	69	12	42
	223....	41		27		13	
	224....	55		21		13	
	225....	26		5		4	
Total.....		.....	1,446	.....	614	.....	667

TABLE VIII

TOTAL NUMBER OF NEGRO MATERNITY CASES AND NUMBER OF CASES OF NEGRO UNMARRIED MOTHERS HANDLED BY THE SOCIAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT OF THE COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL FROM JANUARY 1, 1923, TO DECEMBER 31, 1928

MONTH	1923		1924		1925		1926		1927		1928	
	Maternity Cases	Unmarried Mothers	Maternity Cases	Unmarried Mothers	Maternity Cases	Unmarried Mothers	Maternity Cases	Unmarried Mothers	Maternity Cases	Unmarried Mothers	Maternity Cases	Unmarried Mothers
Jan.....	66	12	135	8	162	27	75	22	145	15	166	21
Feb.....	58	10	154	22	159	21	56	10	134	23	157	20
Mar.....	92	3	158	18	168	13	69	17	187	34	175	24
Apr.....	90	7	141	16	163	13	137	20	162	17	183	22
May.....	83	13	143	15	144	10	180	26	168	19	152	26
June.....	103	17	153	11	128	11	127	12	149	23	157	18
July.....	116	18	158	17	177	16	139	22	167	21	177	17
Aug.....	106	6	173	12	147	17	164	14	149	21	196	22
Sept.....	120	8	160	23	107	12	133	13	199	27	152	20
Oct.....	123	15	147	16	56	9	136	10	133	19	177	31
Nov.....	111	13	139	9	56	9	125	18	152	23	164	25
Dec.....	110	11	172	20	54	14	136	20	127	29	155	22
Total....	1,178	133	1,833	187	1,521	181	1,486	204	1,872	271	2,011	268
Per Cent	100	11.3	100	10.2	100	11.9	100	13.7	100	14.5	100	13.3

TABLE IX

DISTRIBUTION OF NEGRO UNMARRIED MOTHERS IN CEN-  
SUS TRACTS ACCORDING TO UNIT AREAS IN CHICAGO,  
JANUARY 1, 1926, TO JUNE 30, 1928

CENSUS TRACTS AND UNIT AREAS		UNMARRIED MOTHERS	
		Number	Total
SOUTH SIDE	12th Street - - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
	301.....	2	9
	302.....	6	
	303.....	1	
	22d Street - - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
	304.....	9	62
	305.....	1	
	321.....	3	
	333.....	1	
	334.....	15	
	335.....	20	
	336.....	13	
	32d Street - - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
	328.....	0	138
	337.....	20	
	338.....	17	
	339.....	15	
	340.....	3	
	341.....	13	
	342.....	12	
	343.....	14	
	344.....	22	
	394.....	22	
	396.....	0	
	39th Street - - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
	382.....	8	119
	383.....	24	
	384.....	24	
	385.....	15	
	386.....	19	
	387.....	14	
	399.....	15	
	47th Street - - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
	388.....	5	73
	389.....	12	
	390.....	6	
	391.....	9	
	392.....	3	
	393.....	14	
	432.....	9	
	433.....	15	

TABLE IX—*Continued*

CENSUS TRACTS AND UNIT AREAS		UNMARRIED MOTHERS	
		Number	Total
SOUTH SIDE— <i>Cont.</i>	55th Street - - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
	434.....	6	16
	435.....	3	
	436.....	0	
	437.....	7	
	63rd Street - - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
	446.....	6	6
	67th Street - - - - -	- - - - -	- - - - -
Roseland			
	481.....	2	2
Morgan Park			
	492.....	5	5
Englewood			
	407.....	3	3
	417.....	0	
	419.....	1	
Lower North Side			
	88.....	2	3
	91.....	1	
Near West Side			
	222.....	10	44
	223.....	13	
	224.....	12	
	225.....	9	
Total for all areas.....		.....	481



TABLE X  
PLACE OF BIRTH OF 300 UNMARRIED NEGRO MOTHERS  
IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Place of Birth	Number	Place of Birth	Number
Chicago, Illinois.....	16	Arkansas.....	11
Illinois.....	8	Missouri.....	5
Alabama.....	35	Other northern states..	20
Georgia.....	40	Other southern states..	14
Louisiana.....	24	New York City.....	2
Mississippi.....	64	Washington, D.C.....	1
Kentucky.....	9	Unknown.....	19
South Carolina.....	8		
Tennessee.....	24	Total.....	300

TABLE XI  
DISTRIBUTION OF 300 UNMARRIED NEGRO  
MOTHERS ACCORDING TO AGE

Age	Number	Age	Number	Age	Number
12.....	1	23.....	6	34.....	1
13.....	3	24.....	10	35.....	3
14.....	5	25.....	9	36.....	1
15.....	14	26.....	7	37.....	1
16.....	27	27.....	4	38.....	1
17.....	33	28.....	4	39.....	1
18.....	38	29.....	1	40.....	0
19.....	44	30.....	4	41.....	0
20.....	25	31.....	4	42.....	1
21.....	15	32.....	0	Unknown..	16
22.....	20	33.....	1		
				Total...	300

TABLE XII

MARITAL STATUS OF 300 UNMARRIED NEGRO MOTHERS

	Number	Per Cent
Single.....	240	80.0
Married.....	6	2.0
Widowed.....	9	3.0
Divorced.....	2	0.7
Separated and deserted....	31	10.3
Unknown.....	12	4.0
Total.....	300	100.0

TABLE XIII

EDUCATION OF 300 NEGRO UNMARRIED MOTHERS IN CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

TOTAL	COL- LEGE	HIGH SCHOOL					GRADED SCHOOL								No SCHOOL- ING	UN- KNOWN
		4th	3rd	2d	1st	Un- classi- fied	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	Un- classi- fied		
300...	4	6	9	26	20	9	47	38	27	28	18	3	3	7	4	51

TABLE XIV

NUMBER OF UNMARRIED NEGRO MOTHERS HAVING SPECIFIED NUMBER  
OF ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN ACCORDING TO AGE OF MOTHERS

AGE OF MOTHER	TOTAL NUMBER OF MOTHERS	NUMBER OF ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN		
		1	2	3
12.....	1	1	0	0
13.....	3	3	0	0
14.....	5	5	0	0
15.....	14	13	1	0
16.....	27	25	2	0
17.....	33	31	2	0
18.....	38	34	4	0
19.....	44	40	4	0
20.....	25	21	4	0
21.....	15	8	5	2
22.....	20	18	2	0
23.....	6	5	1	0
24.....	10	8	2	0
25.....	9	6	3	0
26-42.....	34	28	5	1
Unknown.....	16	14	1	1
Total.....	300	260	36	4

TABLE XV

NUMBER OF NEGRO BOYS AND GIRLS BROUGHT INTO THE JUVENILE  
COURT OF COOK COUNTY DURING EACH FISCAL YEAR,  
DECEMBER 1, 1919, TO NOVEMBER 30, 1929

Year	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929
Delinquent:										
Boys.....	182	194	177	161	310	326	320	342	427	435
Girls.....	128	100	116	108	107	98	117	154	166	132
Dependent:										
Boys.....	45	30	26	26	52	79	86	79	109	81
Girls.....	40	26	37	46	61	50	73	76	101	102

TABLE XVI

DISTRIBUTION OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY AMONG NEGRO BOYS  
IN CENSUS TRACTS ACCORDING TO UNIT AREAS IN CHICAGO

CENSUS TRACTS AND UNIT AREAS		JUVENILE COURT CASES JANUARY 1, 1923, TO JUNE 1, 1924		BOYS ARRESTED FOR JUVENILE DELIN- QUENCY, 1926		BOYS ARRESTED FOR JUVENILE DELIN- QUENCY, 1927	
		Number	Total	Number	Total	Number	Total
SOUTH SIDE	12th Street -						
	301....	4		4		5	
	302....	3	12	24	33	21	29
	303....	5		5		3	
	22d Street -						
	304....	2		23		17	
	305....	2		2		9	
	321....	0		12		18	
	333....	0	40	26	208	25	213
	334....	26		82		69	
	335....	4		33		45	
	336....	6		30		30	
	32d Street -						
	328....	0		3		0	
	337....	8		43		45	
	338....	7		33		23	
	339....	12		33		11	
	340....	2		17		6	
	341....	9	65	52	373	57	327
	342....	4		33		30	
	343....	4		28		39	
	344....	10		82		93	
	394....	8		42		37	
	396....	1		7		1	
	39th Street -						
	382....	2		22		31	
	383....	7		51		103	
	384....	14		67		73	
	385....	5	40	60	364	43	420
	386....	6		76		73	
	387....	2		52		47	
	399....	4		36		50	



TABLE XVI—*Continued*

CENSUS TRACTS AND UNIT AREAS		JUVENILE COURT CASES JANUARY 1, 1923, TO JUNE 1, 1924		BOYS ARRESTED FOR JUVENILE DELIN- QUENCY, 1926		BOYS ARRESTED FOR JUVENILE DELIN- QUENCY, 1927	
		Number	Total	Number	Total	Number	Total
SOUTH SIDE	47th Street -		-----		-----		-----
	388....	8		34		40	
	389....	3		33		46	
	390....	2		25		24	
	391....	4	32	19	223	21	277
	392....	0		22		11	
	393....	3		24		41	
	432....	9		26		37	
	433	3		30		57	
	55th Street -		-----		-----		-----
	434....	2		25		17	
	435....	0		15		26	
	436....	0	2	6	59	3	52
	437....	0		13		6	
	63rd Street -		-----		-----		-----
	446....	0	0	5	5	16	16
	67th Street -		-----		-----		-----
Roseland							
	481....	0	0	5	5	9	9
Morgan Park							
	492....	3	3	27	27	32	32
Englewood							
	398....	0		7		4	
	408....	0	0	0	8	0	7
	410....	0		1		3	
Lower North Side							
	88....	0	0	5	7	3	11
	91....	0		2		8	
Near West Side							
	222....	3		8		20	
	223....	16	31	5	25	41	95
	224....	8		10		30	
	225....	4		2		4	
Total.....			213	.....	1,322	.....	1,503

TABLE XVII

ENVIRONMENT OF SEVEN ZONES OF THE NEGRO COMMUNITY ON  
THE SOUTH SIDE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

UNIT AREA	HOUSES OF PROSTITUTION		RESORTS SUMMER OF 1919					HOUSES OF PROSTITUTION	STORE-FRONT CHURCHES, ETC.
	1916	1918	Houses of Prostitution	Saloons	Billiard Halls	Gambling Places	Cabarets	1928	1928
12th Street -	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
22d Street -	48	25	23	37	1	4	0	1	4
32d Street -	93	96	72	63	16	22	3	9	27
39th Street -	45	61	40	80	16	16	8	46	40
47th Street -	10	47	19	23	8	2	0	33	48
55th Street -	0	6	10	25	5	7	1	33	23
63rd Street -	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	6
67th Street -	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

NOTE.—Statistics on houses of prostitution, 1916 and 1918, and resorts for the summer of 1919 were taken from maps in *The Negro in Chicago*. Statistics on the houses of prostitution in 1928 were for those closed by the Committee of Fifteen. Statistics for churches, etc., include churches in houses or apartments, "advisers," and spiritualist churches. Church statistics were taken from a map showing the distribution of Negro churches prepared by Mr. Robert L. Sutherland, graduate student in the department of social ethics of the University of Chicago.

## APPENDIX C

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